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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[CLARICE'S LOVER.]

FATE OR FOLLY; OR, AN ILL-OMENED MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Violet's Victims," "Lord Jasper's Secret," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVII.

"I WANT LOVE."

With each and all Love lives at feud. Beware
Lest while I speak he cast a dainty snare
Over your heart at last.

As Sir Richard talked to Clarice, sometimes cynically and then sympathetically, according to his varying mood, she felt dull throbbings of fear assail her and beat upon her brain.

She saw the village church again, she heard the old white-haired clergyman's voice as he read the marriage service, and she could feel the tremor of Dudley's hand meeting hers at the altar, the palpitating restlessness that seemed to make him conscious of danger.

The wild, fevered eyes turned on her had a hunted, terrified look in them even then, as the soft air strayed into the church through the window, and lifted the ivy over the porch and the silvery leaves of the weeping willows with its faint rustling sound.

She shivered and covered her face with her

small, white hands, which had grown thinner of late. Sir Herbert at times had looked at her critically, almost wonderingly, as if he divined there was something hidden; but she believed this was only nervous fear, called into being by a guilty conscience. And the pangs of an unsatisfied, hopeless love thrilled her anew; yet hers was not the love that absence or estrangement increases.

"I am anxious that you should be guarded from all harm," went on Sir Richard, thoughtfully, "and Sir Herbert is a man to be trusted with a young girl's happiness; he is universally respected; his family is first-rate; you will go into the highest society in the land."

"But he seems dreadfully cool and quiet," sobbed poor Clarice, too goaded not to be natural.

"Cool and quiet! Do you want a volcano, or a firebrand, that will explode at a minute's notice?"

"I want love," murmured Clarice, acting again.

Love! The little word sent a thrill through every nerve and vein in Sir Richard's body. It brought back tragedy, agony, remorse, and crime. Clarice saw that nervous flush, those quivering lips. Love—the very life-breath of a woman's being; love that had gone to the stake and courted death for him; love that has wrought more woe and ruin and misery in this world almost than war—why did this girl's natural appeal bring back those fierce pangs of memory and make the strong man writhe like a soul in torment?

He lay back silent and motionless in his chair. He was again in India; he was amid the wild, picturesque scenery and the sun-kissed

blossoms of that exquisite land where all is vivid, passionate and intense. He dreamt of love beneath the burning sky of Asia; he saw a woman's tender, dreamy eyes uplifted to his and the present faded.

Then came a vision of fierce hands outstretched to slay, of tigerish rage, of fearful threats—a woman's dead body with a golden chain upon her breast passing under his sight, hands crossed meekly, long ebony tresses hanging over her shoulders like a cloud of blackest night, while the sweet silent lips seemed to murmur even in death:

"For thy sake, beloved—for thy sake!"

"I shall go mad if I think," cried the master of the Manor House, staggering to his feet. "Ah, Clarice, my poor child, for pity's sake never speak to me of love."

Clarice was too frightened and over-awed to answer. She, too, held her own ghastly secret; she, too, wept prayerfully night after night by her little white bed. She lifted his hand with a well-remembered childish gesture, and carried it to her lips.

"I will marry Sir Herbert Tresilian since it is your wish," she murmured, faintly, yielding as she always did when any stress was brought to bear on her.

She knew that she would rather die than Sir Richard should guess how she had deceived him.

"You've been so very good to me always," sobbed Clarice. "Is it likely I can forget your generosity and kindness? My greatest pleasure, dear Sir Richard, will be to marry whom you please."

"I thought so," he answered; "that's spoken

like my brave Clarice," rising and bending over her.

"And I only wish," she added, naively, laughing now a little, "that I had been older and that you could have married me, so that I never, never must have left you."

"And sing 'Grandfather's Clock' all day, for I'm old enough to be your grandfather, child," he said, delighted that she would accede to his wishes and accept Sir Herbert Tresilian.

Clarice's was a very affectionate nature, but her first love-dream had been too much for her wisdom and common-sense; and now Heaven knows "she was punished wherein she had sinned."

How often are the acts and consequences of head-long passion irremediable. Clarice in her own mind looked upon Dudley as dead to her; he had sworn he would never claim her—that they two should pass for ever along separate paths. And Clarice had no nobility, candour or real principle to guide her, she wanted to retain her position in the world and society at all costs; disgrace and humiliation might after all be struck at and defied—if they should overtake her at last, she could, she reflected, but throw down her arms at the eleventh hour.

Sir Richard had persuaded Zama to return for a time to the Manor House, as Lord Ormond had been forced to leave England on diplomatic business very suddenly. He promised her that he would buy another estate as soon as he had time to set about it, and already he was in treaty for one in Surrey.

Sir Herbert Tresilian had returned from Scarborough with Sir Richard and wrote word to his mother, Lady Tresilian, at Crawley Castle, that things were looking highly promising. He gave no description of Clarice beyond saying she was very nice and amiable. A marriage with Clarice meant luxury and wealth. Sir Herbert knew that all worry would be ended for him when that eccentric kinsman of his, Sir Richard Allington, allowed him a clear three thousand a year on his marriage, and something like twelve thousand a year more after his death, as his heir. Clarice dreaded Sir Richard's anger too much to risk throwing herself on his mercy, but she shrank from the contemplated marriage with Sir Herbert as adding a crime to an act that had been weakness and folly.

"They will surely give me time," she mused, trying to deaden the voice of her conscience; "they will gain my consent and let me rest awhile in peace after that—and then who knows what may happen to set me free from him?"

She knew that only by Dudley's death could freedom ever be given her. Were he to die in prison, even after her marriage with Sir Herbert, and preserving silence to the end, then all might still be well. So Clarice, clinging to straws and chances, and vague possibilities, her happiness and love shattered by a cruel blow, resolved to retain wealth at all hazards. She could never be lighthearted or really at rest any more, life must be for her only dull endurance with despair at the root, but it was better, she thought, to despair in comfort, ease, and affluence.

When Sir Richard left the library for a few moments Clarice rose softly and opened the drawer of the cabinet in which he kept the likeness of his lost daughter. She was oppressed by a restless desire to view her only dangerous rival. It was a fair child's face—Lilian photographed a few days before Sir Richard lost her. She carried a basketful of red-heart cherries in her little hands, and a hood shaded her sunny hair, which hung in curls to her waist. There was something sad even then in her beautiful childish eyes, thought Clarice—they spoke of a soul, of a power to suffer and to love.

This girl alone could dash the golden cup from her hand. Not Dudley, nor Sir Herbert, for she meant to have and to hold Sir Richard's proffered wealth, in spite of that fatal mistake.

"It is only if Lilian comes to claim her heritage that I shall lose," murmured Clarice, pale to the lips, "and even then not all; Sir Richard has made provision for me and Sir Herbert in any case. But if he knew—great heavens!—that I was Dudley Ivor's wife he would turn me

from his door this very day, with a curse on my deceit!"

She softly replaced the likeness, but not before she was conscious of a strange pair of aged eyes intently watching her, and saw a woman's form pass the library window. Who was it? Clarice had often fancied of late she had been followed and watched by strangers.

"Has he betrayed me, I wonder?" she cried, smiting her breast, thinking of Dudley as a tumult of terror seized her; this worn and aged face resembled that of Dudley's mother.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LADY TRESILIAN SPRAWS HER MIND.

There is no satiety of love in this.
Enjoy'd, thou still art now; perpetual spring
Is in thy arms.

THE Tresilians of Crawley Castle were people to whom money had always been an object. They belonged to that unhappy class of the "upper ten," the people of "breed," who are forced at all hazards to keep up appearances. Whereas Mrs. Scratchell could go to market with a basket under her arm and buy a peck of peas and a cheap ramp-steat, cook and eat them without any of her acquaintances turning up their noses at her, Lady Tresilian often had to go without those nutritive articles of diet, and feed herself and household on the fish, whether she liked it or not, which her patrician friends at times kindly sent her from Scotland—salmon, for instance, which they had caught themselves in the Clyde, knowing all the while how very acceptable the offering would be.

Lady Tresilian, too, was a very proud woman, and there is nothing on earth makes us suffer such agonies as a sound, gentlemanly old-fashioned pride. It tortured her to have to show the cloven foot, her poverty, now and then before her friends, enemies, and servants. Perhaps her friends were the worst—they were so sincerely sorry for the great lady's manoeuvres and schemes.

Her splendid family diamonds and pearls were in pawn, and so also was a quantity of her finest lace and silver. Once she had owned one of the costliest lace flouncers in Europe, which had originally belonged to Queen Anne of Austria. Now, alas! it reposed in the safe custody of Messrs. Solomon Bros., while the trifling interest of twenty-five per cent. was yearly paid for their advance on that regal flounce.

Bitter tears had her ladyship shed and bitter reproaches had her sons, Herbert and Rupert, listened to as they confessed their inability to redeem this priceless heirloom, suggesting selling it as more prudent, till her ladyship's hysterics warned them never to interfere in future.

Sir Herbert had returned home to Crawley Castle at Sir Richard's suggestion, for he thought that it would be as well not to harass Clarice or urge her too hastily in her choice, but to let her, now that she had expressed herself willing to please him, have time to thoroughly consider the matter.

Lady Tresilian was sitting to-day in her pleasant morning-room at the castle, reading some letters that had just arrived. Sir Herbert was smoking, lazily scanning the columns of the "Times." Rupert, who had just returned from the East, was preparing to enter his studio for a few hours' work. This was a large and lofty room at the castle, which had once served as a banquetting hall, and Lady Tresilian now placed it entirely at her younger son's disposal.

"Then you really think, my dear Herbert, that there is no doubt of Miss Heathcote accepting you?" Lady Tresilian was saying, while Rupert lingered.

Sir Herbert laughed.
"Doubt about it? I should say not. She's ready to accept me whenever I propose to her. But there's no need for such haste as you suggest, ma mère. 'Hurry,' says an old Arabian sage, 'is the devil.'"

"And how have you learnt Arabian sayings?"

asked Rupert, throwing himself into an easy chair.

"Don't know. Come natural, I suppose. It's quite enough of a bore, let me tell you, to be ordered to marry a young woman, whether you like her or not. Have you a cigar light handy? In this case the girl is really not half a bad sort—aw, really quite presentable."

Rupert laughed and threw his brother over a cigar light. Lady Tresilian's sharp tongue again sounded, and made both brothers wish to leave the room.

"Herbert is so very dilatory," she said, looking towards Rupert. "He lets everything take its chance. Indifference is all very well, Bertie, when a man is rich; but when I remember our position, my laces, diamonds, even silver and card-baskets, all at Solomon's—the wretch is positively coming gold out of us—why, it makes me miserable not to know Clarice has really accepted you."

"Of course it does, mother mine," said Rupert, sily. "What would I not give to have an heiress waiting for me?"

"You've got a damned pretty little girl waiting for you, Master Rupert, let me tell you that," said Sir Herbert, quickly, almost enviously.

"Not a ballet-girl, pray. Nothing off a stage or music-hall?" gasped Lady Tresilian, looking at Rupert as if he meant ultimately to bring her grey hairs—at present dyed a handsome nut-brown—in sorrow to the grave.

"Herbert is joking," said his brother, lightly, "he always is. Do I look like a marrying man? Besides, what have I to keep a wife on? Can't even pay for my models."

"Well, then, he has a pretty little friend," said Sir Herbert, shrugging his shoulders—"one of your congenial angels who understands the age and says, 'No, I won't disgrace you by being your wife, darling, because you're not worth powder and shot. I'll only cost you more in the end. Buy me furst thirty guineas, and diamonds and ponies and guinea-a-bottle wi—'"

"Herbert," cried Lady Tresilian, thoroughly scandalised, and sweeping the train of her satin dress hastily after her over the carpet, "you will not talk thus in my presence, if you please."

These sons of hers worried her a good deal. She always clung to the hope of their marrying girls with splendid fortunes, and here was Sir Herbert, backed up by Sir Richard Allington, on the brink of leaping into luxury and affluence, while Rupert could marry a duke's daughter, who had fallen madly in love with him over a game of lawn-tennis, and yet neither seemed at all inclined to be serious or even to take a prudent reasonable view of their situations.

"Why did you talk like that before Lady Tresilian?" asked Rupert, arming as she left the room. "Is it kind or brotherly of you, Bertie, to try and set my mother against me in this way? I'm no schemer, thank goodness."

"Schemer?" echoed Sir Herbert. "I suppose that's one for me. You know, Ru, there is a certain charming little cottage some distance from the high road, all covered with creeping plants, and roses and honeysuckles, where my brother hides a 'Fair Rosamond.'"

"Nothing of the sort, Bertie. The girl is my wife."

"Wife?" echoed Sir Herbert, falling back in his chair and laughing softly; "here is romance with a vengeance. Why, who suggested the luxury of marriage to you? And who may my fair sister-in-law be?"

Little did Sir Herbert guess who that lovely young wife of his brother's was.

"She is a mystery to everybody," said Rupert, hurriedly. "And I do wish, dear old boy, for the sake of old times, and that sort of thing, you'd say nothing about my marriage yet to the mater. I hate rows and scenes in a family, and until everything is more settled what is the use of upsetting her? I shall very likely go and live over in Italy soon for good."

"I tell you what, Ru. When I'm married to Clarice, and have lots of coin, you shall have a slice of the fortune too. I'm not a cur, longing

to grasp every shilling, and do my brother out of everything, and I'm sure I'd never have alluded to the girl at all, old fellow, if I'd thought you objected. I suppose you're jolly happy and all that."

"Happy!" echoed Rupert, "it is heaven for us both. It seems to intoxicate us. We grow as foolish as two children together."

"Oh! 'tis love, 'tis love that makes the world go round," hummed Sir Herbert, thinking of dark-eyed Clarice; and half envying his brother the tender romance of love's young dream.

"Perhaps you'll be equally fond of your Clarice one of these days," said Rupert, consolingly, "though I don't think my elder brother has much idea, at present, of the real meaning of love."

"Not the slightest, 'pon honour," answered Sir Herbert, lifting his glass; "all women seem to me to be much of a muchness, as they say. What! going already, Ru? Won't you stay and have a brandy and soda? Of course you're off to the cottage. Oh, you sly dog. I saw the oozy blue curtains and the virginia creeper, and a pretty golden head at the window."

"Ta, ta, Bertie!" laughed Rupert, as he left the room. "Someday I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tresilian before we're off to Italy. I cannot do a stroke of work here. You're all so realistic, and the way my mother talks of money and position seems to kill all the art in a man."

"Thank Heaven I'm only a duffer," said Sir Herbert, yawning; "I never understood your inspirations, Ru, but if all ends right with Clarice and Sir Richard, mind, I don't forget I have a brother."

Then they shook hands warmly and Rupert was soon hurrying across the park towards the little cottage alluded to by Sir Herbert, where a certain sweet young presence awaited him.

"Aida," cried Rupert, looking eagerly towards the little garden and calling to Lilian from the open window.

She came running towards him at his call. Could this be the same Lilian? She looked dazlingly lovely in the soft September sunshine—a joyous love-light was reflected from her large, violet-hued eyes; her whole attitude and appearance was that of intense happiness. She threw herself into his arms with a little cry of joy.

"I was able to get away sooner to you to-day, Aida," Rupert said, caressing the loose rings of her golden hair, "and so my little girl is pleased to see me?"

He gathered her closer in his arms and kissed the sweet, flower-like mouth again and again. Surely it is good to love like this; to love in all honour and reverence and truth—to feel the caressed woman is no fair deception, no living lie, that Heaven's blessing must rest upon the pure joys of consecrated bliss. It is an humble, honest life, but it is home and peace for both.

"I feel sometimes almost too happy to live, Rupert," said Lilian, nestling down by his side; "this is better than waiting for the nose-gays and sweets in the old Roman garden. I've been singing and skipping about all the morning in the fields like a child."

She who had suffered so cruelly from her father's implacable, life-long enemy had reached at last a haven of refuge. If Sir Richard could but have once beheld her now when she seemed to bloom like a rose! But never again in this world can he see Lilian; only in dreams the tiny childish figure, and the young hands holding the basket of cherries, will flit before him, and then he will start and cry:

"Little one, my love, my darling, stay with me for a while, it comforts me to see you again, if only in a dream."

In the midst of all our grief and passionate clinging to the loved and lost these visions we get of them in our sleep are brief but sure consolations, for they point to the dim, unknown future, when, perhaps, they will be with us again and know how fondly we loved and clung to them.

Rupert looked at Lilian as if this confession of her happiness made him idolise her still more.

This lovely creature was his—all his. He had brought her from darkness to light.

"Aida, my child wife—my own pet," said Rupert, fondly stroking her hair "be a child as long as you can, sing with the birds and enjoy your youth—Heaven knows the past has been black indeed."

"It is enough for me to think of you, Rupert, to be in Paradise," she answered, wreathing her arms about his throat.

CHAPTER XIX.

LA FATAL INFLUENCE.

Who can only stretch out his hands and weep
And laugh by turns in a strange, wild way.

SIR HERBERT did not give Clarice time to forget him. He was back again at the Manor House before September's winds had blown down the last of the fruit.

He knew he was expected to marry Clarice, and that by no other process than marriage with her could he exorcise himself from the many debts with which his father had encumbered the estates.

But would Clarice be induced to accept him? He confessed himself utterly at a loss to understand her. She was sometimes flighty and then sad—then riotously merry—an almost mocking merriment of which he did not approve. There was also an odd frightened look on the girl's face when he addressed her that also proved decidedly mysterious to him.

"I'm quite certain she has something on her mind," thought Sir Herbert, strolling along the avenue smoking one of his kinsman's finest cigars; "and it shall be the business of my life to find out what it is—or else she's hysterically inclined."

He had generally avoided women of an hysterical temperament, as likely to weary him with emotions in which he could not sympathize; but no matter what were Clarice's peculiarities, he most decidedly meant to waive them and become her husband. Reared in an atmosphere of worldliness, Sir Herbert was an ambitious man; he wished to become a member of Parliament and entertain largely, with magnificence and spirit. How could he do this without wealth?

So when he found Clarice wandering alone in the gardens of the Manor House, he made up his mind that he would strike while the iron was hot. She interested him apart from her being a splendid partie—he fancied she was deeply in love with somebody else, and, if the idea were not flattering to himself, it clearly amused him.

When Clarice saw Sir Herbert approaching her she divined what was coming. This man was destined to be her fate; the sound of his footsteps scarcely frightened her to-day, because she knew the worst would soon be over.

If her thoughts turned for a second to that lonely ruined life which had to be endured as a punishment, she resolved that its memory should not stifle her now to her own undoing. Her very weakness disposed her to be daring and even reckless at crises such as these.

"Ah! Miss Heathcote," said Sir Herbert, lifting his glass and nodding slightly towards her. "You are not going to run away from me to-day, I hope."

Her cheeks were the colour of the scarlet geraniums that the brisk September wind had begun to blow down the path—late fruits were ripening, the air was fresh but soft. Clarice felt it about her temples lifting the dark hair with defiant force.

He thought her beautiful with that heightened colour; she wore a dark grey dress cut a little open in front, that showed the heavings of her white breast—she had pinned a rose against the lace and its leaves caressed her snowy skin.

"Oh! no, Sir Herbert," Clarice answered, hastily closing her parasol, and then the colour left her cheek, and she was pale as she had been that day in the little inn parlour, when Dudley had begged a love already his.

"Do you know, Miss Heathcote, that I am afraid I'm beginning to think and care too much about our meeting," he went on, as if addressing some reigning beauty of the season whose name figured in the "Court Guide."

Clarice started as if stung. Her impulses were very swift and vehement, and she was in that over-wrought mood when it is difficult to be on guard.

"Why do you pretend all that to me?" she said, passionately. "I'm not to be blinded by such words as those to your real feelings. In your heart you half dislike me; it's so natural, isn't it, that we should quite hate each other under the circumstances?"

Sir Herbert felt as if a douche of cold water had been sprinkled over him with no regard for his feelings. Was this mild Clarice speaking with trembling voice and looking at him with burning eyes? Sir Herbert, if no saint, had never been a professed profligate; he had never hardened into the roué, and he was really rather fond of Clarice.

"Dear little thing, there's some go in her, by Jove!" was his reflection, admiring her uncommonly. "Why should we hate each other?" he asked, unmoved. "Because we've both been told we're to be married? Heaps of people hate each other just the same when they tumble into the rusty old chains from mutual inclination. Don't they pull at them, too, after, and run away from them into the bargain?"

Clarice felt ashamed of her outbreak. How Dudley would have flown at her and reproached her and made her cry her eyes out till he consented to forgive her. She rather thought Sir Herbert was prepared to put up with anything. In this, however, she reckoned without her host.

"I can't help loving you even if you dislike me," he said, pleasantly. "How can I? Neither is it your fault if you are lovely and fascinating. Listen to me, dear—mayn't I call you dear just once?—and don't draw away your little hand as if I were something dangerous; the fact is, Clarice, that it is our mutual interest to become a happy pair. Why need we go in for the dolefuls, or quarrel more than—say once a week? I'm prepared to make you an offer of my hand and heart—to be your faithful, loving husband—a regular Darby and Joan sort of—no, I mean a John Anderson—well, anything you please. But I do love you, Clarice; rich or poor it would be all the same to me."

Sir Herbert imposed on himself quite touchingly, for Clarice poor would never have been his choice in the present state of his feelings towards her as a lover. But who can unravel the future? Still, shut up with her for weeks in the old Manor House he had found her agreeable, and she was decidedly a pretty girl.

"You don't ask me if I love you," said Clarice, coquetting as she always did to gain time.

"Why? Because I know very well you don't care a sixpence for me. Your heart was stolen by that thief, Dudley Ivers, who went to prison?"

Sir Herbert had not been prepared for the effect his words produced on Clarice. She had been pale before, but now she was perfectly livid.

"Hit her hard there, by Jove!" thought Sir Herbert, scarcely flattered.

Clarice covered her face with her hands.

"I swear before Heaven that you are wrong," she said, recovering her self-possession by a marvellous effort. "There is no man living I have a greater loathing for."

Still he did not believe her. These girls, pretty little sinners, told white lies as readily as they swallowed strawberries.

"Then if I am wrong, what is your objection to me?"

"None at all," said Clarice, with a wintry smile. "It must be—Sir Richard and you wish it—and I should hate to be poor."

"Yes, it's miserably slow work," said Sir Herbert, emphatically. "Nothing on earth, 'pon honour, is worth having save money; it will buy every pleasure."

"Will it?" rejoined Clarice, dreamily.

She had sworn she loathed Dudley, wicked, handsome, suffering Dudley, her husband, her lover, the first man who had taught her what the agonies, transports and delirium of love meant, and then she said, quickly:

"Please leave me now, Sir Herbert, to regain calmness; you have your answer—I will be your wife."

He obeyed, partly satisfied. Suspicion was arising. Clarice's life held a mystery. And she, throwing herself to the floor in her little bedroom a few minutes later, writhed and groaned in her sick despair. How hard that one thoughtless, foolish act should bear such life-long evil fruit. Clarice wondered if that circle of gold—the new wedding-ring she had flung into the stream in her passion and sorrow—was still buried under the slime and weeds where she had thrown it on her ill-omened wedding morn.

She began to dwell on its memory as if it were a sentient thing which could arise and bear witness against her. She lay prone across her little bed, a faintness numbing her senses. Presently Mary entered, and seeing Clarice's suffering, went up to her and sat down on a chair by her bedside. Only to this faithful servant could Clarice ever unburden her fears, or speak of the secret of her life.

"I know, dear miss, why you're fretting so," said Mary, thoughtfully: "we've 'eard all about master's wishes in the servants' hall. He wants you to marry his heir, Sir Herbert; but, miss, speaking plainly, dare you do it?"

"Yes," said Clarice, writhing again, and lifting herself from her pillow. "I'd dare anything—death itself—sooner than he should guess how weak and deceitful I've been."

"Aunt allays said you was a bit sly, miss," said Mary, slowly, conscious of her power over beautiful Clarice. "We none of us can 'elp our natures—what's born in us, I mean—can we? and I'm sure I'm that sorry for you I could cry too."

"Wipe your eyes with this five-pound note," said Clarice, coldly, rising and resenting her maid's free speaking.

She opened her jewel-case and threw the note into Mary's lap.

"I'm sure, miss, you're very generous and kind, indeed," said Mary, crimsoning with delight.

"Oh, no," said Clarice, wearily, accustomed to her maid's expressions of gratitude. "Don't thank me ever, only be silent."

"Which indeed, miss, I always am; and do try and taste a bit of the chicken 'unt is roasting for lunch. Try a liver-wing, miss, and some bread sauce and peas—now do. I'll bring it all up to you 'ere, and it 'all do you good, and put some life and spirit into you."

But Clarice shook her head, and then told her maid to go downstairs, she wished to be alone; a liver-wing is no consolation to a broken heart. As the girl withdrew, Clarice knelt down again by the bed and covered her face with her hands, scarcely daring to glance around at the various objects in her bedroom; they reminded her too painfully of her position and the present, while for long hours there was the sound of weeping in that little sanctuary; these are the fluctuations and changes in all weak natures.

"I cannot quite harden my heart against him," moaned Clarice, thinking of Dudley, "although I swore just now that I loathed him. Oh, bitter, bitter fate, to be bound as I am, to be on the verge of a crime. Shall I have the courage to go on to the end? My dearest, dearest love! I cannot, try as I may, hate you."

(To be Continued.)

AN ERROR FOR LIFE.

ONCE wedded for life to an unworthy partner, an error has been made which will rob it of all sweetness and joy. Let the young think of this, and let them walk carefully in a world of snares,

and take heed to their steps, lest in the most critical event of life they go fatally astray.

But here we must guard against another error. Many people think they have made a mistake in marriage when the mistake is only in their own behaviour since they were married. Good husbands make good wives, and good wives make good husbands; and the scolding and intemperate, or slatternly, partner often has but himself or herself to blame for the misery that clouds the life and desolates the home.

Multitudes who feel that their marriage was a mistake, and who make their existence a life-long misery, might, by a little self-denial, and forbearance, and gentleness, and old-time courtesy, make their home brighter like the gates of Eden, and bring back again the old love that blessed the happy golden days gone by. And what sweeter mission in life than that of reclaiming the weak and sinful!

SMALL MEANS.

'Twas but a little ray
That shone across the moor,
A feeble light; but, following it,
I reached an open door.

I found a hearthstone bright,
Within a cosy nest—
A chair beside the chimney, where
The weary might take rest.

But for the candle's beam
That from the window shone
My footsteps might have turned aside
To dangers now unknown.

And thus, my friend, it is
A thing that seems too small
To figure in our plan of life,
Or shape our course at all,

Of proves a mighty power
To bring us woe or weal,
And then we blinded mortals see
The "wheel within a wheel."

A little drop of rain
Foretells the coming shower,
A little bud is but a type
Of many a coming flower.

A single grain of wheat,
A tiny blade of grass,
Is one of that rich army that
Shall greet us as we pass.

Then let us, as we know
How small and yet how great,
Are Nature's ways of handiwork,
Serenely watch and wait.

S. W.

SCIENCE.

CLOCKS WOUND UP BY ELECTRICITY.

A CLOCKMAKER of Copenhagen, named Louis Soenderberg, who for some time past has had charge of that city's electric timekeepers, has just invented an ingenious appliance which obviates the necessity of winding up the regulator from which the clocks in question "take their time." By a mechanical contrivance which periodically cuts off the stream of electric fluid emanating from the battery, and brings an electro-magnet to bear upon the relaxed mainspring in such sort as to renew its tension instantaneously, perpetual motion is practically imparted to the works of the regulator—that is to say, as long as the batteries connected with it are kept properly supplied with acids.

The discoverer of this important improvement has satisfied himself, by six months' successful experiments in his own workshops, that his

system works faultlessly, and has applied for permission to adapt it to the electric clocks set up by the municipality in different parts of the Danish capital. Electricity, under Mr. Soenderberg's compulsion, is destined not only to make the Copenhagen clocks go but to wind them up, with never-ending recurrence, until the "crack of doom."

STEERING WITHOUT COXSWAINS.

AN apparatus for steering coxswainless boats has been contrived, the simplicity of which in great measure does away with the chance of fouls. All plans for steering boats, in which a kind of pitchfork is fastened to the foot, are objectionable, because the slightest movement of the foot puts the rudder on, and one has to think which way to move the foot. This apparatus consists of two levers, the free ends of which project over the stretcher, and the other ends are screwed on to a cross-bar behind the stretcher, the right or left foot being used according as one wishes to go to the right or the left. The rudder lines are brought through a ring in the stern canvas and also through two rings, one on each side of the boat, and then fastened to the levers behind the stretcher. String is used instead of wire for the lines in the rings at the side of the boat, wire being used in the remaining parts. One advantage of the system is that, as both lines must be rather slack, great freedom is given to the feet. The only objection to the idea is that in a narrow boat the rudder cannot be put on very hard.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK ON ANTS.

At the last meeting of the Linnæan Society, Sir John Lubbock gave a further instalment of his observations upon ants. He began with an account of his fresh experiments on their powers of communication, several of which experiments seem to indicate that ants possess something approaching language. From tests with regard to their recognition of relations, he comes to the conclusion that the recognition of ants is not personal or individual. He is also of opinion that eggs laid by workers give forth males, and that in queenless nests males alone are produced. On the contrary, in nests possessing queens, workers are produced in abundance.

These facts lead to the presumption that, in the case of ants as well as that of bees, some special food is required to develop the female embryo into a queen. With regard to the different reception of queens by nests of the same species, Sir John thinks that the hostile reception of queens by his own ants was due to the fact of their having been living in a republic. He relates, besides, various experiments made to test their sense of direction. Studying the relations and treatment of the aphides by the ants, he clearly shows that not only are the aphides protected in the ants' nests, but that their eggs are brought by the ants into their nests and carefully tended by them all through the winter months. Sir John Lubbock concluded with the history and description of a new species of Australian honey ant.

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.—The Metropolitan Board of Works has fixed a plaster cast of a sphinx, coloured to look like bronze, at the base of Cleopatra's Needle, in order to judge of the effect prior to the casting in bronze of the two sphinxes which the board has decided to place on the pedestals. The model now exhibited is an enlarged copy of a small sphinx in stone in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle, which is supposed to be of the same period as the obelisk itself. Certain additions have been made to the base and pedestal of the obelisk in order to hide the broken portions of the column, and if these are approved they will eventually be executed in bronze.



[THE ARRIVAL.]

HER HUSBAND'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Frank Bertram's Wife," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

JEALOUSY.

Where love reigns disturbing jealousy
Doth call himself affection's sentinel.
SHAKESPEARE.

The season was waning. People said it had been an unusually brilliant one, but of this we reck little. It had certainly been strangely fateful to our heroine, for it had brought her face to face with her old love, had changed Sir Reginald Dane into her husband's close companion, and, alas! had sown the first seeds of discord between herself and Hugh.

The Lady Fairleigh was not a suspicious woman; she was by nature open, candid, loyal, and true. It would never have entered her head to doubt her husband, never have occurred to her to spy into his actions, but she had been cruelly deceived once, and it may be this rendered her peculiarly quick to read the conduct of one she wildly loved.

Rosamond knew perfectly that there was a secret between herself and her husband, she knew that Lord Fairleigh himself had confessed as much, but the girl-wife had always imagined it to be something connected with rank or money, not with their home life and domestic ties.

The first eighteen months of her married life had been rarely happy. If there had been a secret neither had touched on it; both were con-

tented to let it rest. But now, with Sir Reginald's insinuations ringing in her ears, she was forced to see the truth. A mystery lay upon the earl's home which she, his wife, could not share. He neglected her to spend a long day at the Court with his steward discussing business; she heard incidentally he had no steward, and he came home with a woman's ornament in his pocket.

From that night Rosamond Vane was an unhappy woman. The sunshine died from her smile, the merriment from her laugh. She filled her place in society still, was even ready with bright jest or gay repartee, but her husband's eyes were quick enough to see that her spirits were unequal and her gaiety often forced. He watched her anxiously.

No one else suspected anything. Lady Fairleigh was the most charming woman in London; if she did not hang on her husband's words or seek his society as often as she once had done, surely that was nothing. The honeymoon was over, that was all.

But the man who, against every dictate of prudence, had married Rosamond Keith simply because he loved her as his very life, did not judge as others. He grew alarmed at his wife's varying colour, at the feverish sparkle of her eye, and he sent for one of the most fashionable physicians of the day.

"I am not ill," said Lady Fairleigh, simply, when the great man was introduced to her. "There is nothing the matter with me, doctor. I cannot think what made Lord Fairleigh send for you."

The wise man replied, carelessly:

"No doubt he is anxious, possessing such a treasure."

And the young countess turned away her face at the speech, and made the shortest and stiffest answer to his medical questions, but chancing to be clever as well as fashionable, the physician did not consider Lord Fairleigh had been at all over anxious.

"The countess is suffering from nervous exhaustion, combined with excessive excitement.

This London life is the worst possible for her. You must take her away at once."

Lord Fairleigh desired nothing better.

"We will go to Italy," he returned, promptly. "Before our marriage I was warned my wife was too delicate to stand the English climate, but I had hoped she was stronger."

"My dear Lord Fairleigh, you quite misunderstand me. It is not the English climate I object to for my patient, simply the life of excitement she now leads. Take her down to some pleasant country place, and let her have plenty of fresh air and rest. That is all Lady Fairleigh requires to make her as strong as nine tenths of her associates."

"I would rather go abroad," shortly.

"Remember it is against my advice," remonstrated the man of physic. "I prescribe positive quiet, without exertion of any kind. It would be far more beneficial than any travelling."

Lord Fairleigh went back to his wife with a troubled face. She caught its expression and looked grave.

"Am I very ill, Hugh?"

"No, only we must be careful of you, Rosamond, my darling. I must have been blind to let you excite yourself as you have been doing lately. Dr. Gibbons says it has quite worn you out, and yet I never thought we were so very gay."

His evident anxiety, the thought of what had really excited her and worn her out, a remembrance of her last illness—all these touched Rosamond. She forgot Sir Reginald's insinuations, she forgot the little cloud that had crept up between her and her husband.

"You would be sorry to lose me, Hugh?"

"My darling," he said, huskily, "don't talk of that. I cannot lose you. I could not live without you. But the case is not so desperate, Rosamond. Rest and quiet will soon restore you; he said so."

"And we shall go away from London? I don't think London suits me, Hugh."

"Why didn't you tell me before? I would

have taken you away at once. Rosamond, my darling, are you keeping anything back; do you feel really ill?"

"No," with a smile that had all her old sweetness, and yet a strange touch of sadness, too, which pained him to the very heart. "I am only tired, Hugh."

"Where shall we go, Rosamond? France, Germany? I don't think you are strong enough for Switzerland."

His wife clung to him with a little gasping cry.

"Take me home, Hugh. Take me to Fairleigh. I shall get well there quickest."

And she believed so firmly. It seemed to Rosamond that if she could only see the place which haunted her imagination, if she could only solve for herself the aching doubts that had been instilled into her mind, she should get better. If only they were false, happiness was hers still, and even if true, once knowing the worst, she should be stronger to bear and suffer it.

When his wife threw herself into his arms with that sobbing cry a great conflict raged in the earl's heart. What was he to do? What excuse could he make to keep his darling far removed from the woman who called herself Countess of Fairleigh? It would have been simplest and easiest to have told the truth, but Hugh feared its effect on Rosamond.

"What makes you want to go to Fairleigh, Rosamond?" he asked her, at last, in a strange, hoarse voice. "My dear one, it would be a dull cage for my beautiful bird."

"But it is your home, Hugh. You have duties there. You're there sometimes, and I cannot picture to myself where you are. I long to see the place which"—oh, how her voice quivered now—"might have been my boy's. Hugh, if you love me, take me to Fairleigh."

"If I loved you less," came unguardedly from him in his perplexity, "I would take you there to-morrow."

"Hugh," with an agony in her voice, "Hugh, why do you shut me out of your home? Is it, dear, you think me unworthy?"

"You are the fairest lady who ever reigned at the Court, Rosamond, I cannot refuse you, we will go down to Fairleigh next Monday."

"Hugh," her hand was on his arm again, "you cannot think how happy you have made me."

"And when the Queen of Belgravia finds life decidedly dull in a little village with no one to call upon her and none to talk to, I hope she won't visit the blame on my shoulders."

"I shan't blame anyone, Hugh, I am not the butterfly you think me."

To her surprise he kissed her passionately, then he said, in a strangely earnest voice:

"My darling, I never thought you one, I know you are as good and noble as you are fair. Only, Rosamond, if you ever regret your visit to Fairleigh Court, remember, my wife, going there was your wish, not mine. I would willingly have kept you away from it for ever."

Rosamond raised her sweet face inquiringly to Hugh's.

"And you think I shall regret it?"

"I fear so;" and then before she knew his intention he had left the room.

Rosamond was delighted she had gained her end. Whatever secret had arisen between her and Hugh, she believed she should discover it at Fairleigh Court, and at least she should have her answer for Sir Reginald's insinuations. That very night she met him at a ball, and as usual his name was inscribed on her programme for more than one dance.

"We are going to the Court on Monday," said Lady Fairleigh, with assumed carelessness, as they were promenading after a gallop. "I am tired of London, and Lord Fairleigh is not fond of the seaside, so we are both going for a long while to Blankshire to see if rest and quiet will set us up."

Sir Reginald looked at her intently.

"I trust there is no real cause for alarm."

"No; my husband is over anxious, so he is

hurrying me away. I don't think myself I am quite fitted for a London life."

She always used Lord Fairleigh's name in her conversation with the baronet. By every means in her power she tried to show him she tolerated him only as an acquaintance. He owed his intimate footing with her to her husband's goodwill, not hers.

Sir Reginald writhed at the continual mention of his rival's name, but he concealed his annoyance well. His one aim was to separate Rosamond and her husband. To accomplish this he could bear everything.

"Still, I am surprised that Lord Fairleigh is taking you to the Court."

"And why?" asked Rosamond, her clear eyes meeting his gaze without flinching. "Pray, did you think the earl ashamed of his wife or his home that you imagined he would not make them known to each other?"

"You always misunderstand me," biting his lips.

The young countess shrugged her shoulders as gracefully as though she belonged to the other side of the channel.

"Possibly. I really have not given much time to the problem."

"Lady Fairleigh," with genuine indignation, "what have I done that you should treat me thus?"

"Nothing," returned Rosamond, with inimitable calm. "Our acquaintance dates from this summer, Sir Reginald, and you have been Lord Fairleigh's friend ever since."

"His friend!" cried the master of Allerton, forgetting everything in the world—friendship, honour, loyalty, remembering only that she was beautiful and had loved him once. "His friend! Do you think I could ever be the friend of the man who robbed me of you? I hate him; I loathe him; I despise him in that, having won a love like yours, he does not know how to prize it better!"

"Silence!" she said, sternly. "You have tried to make me distrust him before, but my eyes are opened now. While I live I shall believe in my husband."

"Indeed!" ironically. "You will be a rare model of conjugal faith, for I fancy your trust will be pretty severely tried if all accounts are true; the earl has had good reasons for keeping his wife away from Fairleigh Court."

"Sir Reginald," said Rosamond, coldly, "henceforth, if you please, we are strangers. I cannot—I will not listen to such things as these."

"You cannot flee me if you would," he rejoined, bitterly; "you have the will but not the power. While we both move in society our meeting is inevitable. You can hardly tell your sister hostesses that you object to me because I am not devoted to your husband. And having once accepted the position of receiving me on a friendly footing, you cannot carry your story to the Earl of Fairleigh."

Rosamond locked her two hands nervously together. She saw now the cruel mistake she had made; she was in a measure in this man's power.

"I wish I had told him," she moaned. "If I had only trusted him at first he could not have been angry with me."

No thought of telling him now came to her. Love is very quick, and Rosamond understood her husband's character thoroughly. If she had been afraid weeks ago to go to him and say: "This is the man who deserted me because I was poor," she could not go to him now, when that man had become his own honoured guest, his constant companion, his respected friend.

There were no great preparations to make before leaving town. The day after he had consented to take his wife to the Court, Lord Fairleigh came into Rosamond's boudoir.

"Don't you think you shall be rather dull down in Blankshire, dear? Wouldn't you like to invite a friend to go with you?"

Her eyes sought him with a questioning eagerness.

"You are coming, aren't you, Hugh?"

He fairly laughed at that; he could laugh

still, in spite of perplexities she knew nothing of.

"Certainly. You don't imagine I am going to let my wife bury herself alone in a dull old country house. I am coming too to assist at the interment."

"Then I want no one else, dear."

He put his arm round her and kissed her passionately. There were times—this was one—when, in spite of the pink bow, Rosamond could not doubt that she possessed his whole heart. Outsiders always said his manner was absurd—almost two years married and a lover still.

"I had thought, Rosamond, you might like to ask the Granvilles. You have seen so little of them, and Mrs. Granville would be a good companion for you while I am out."

"Are you going to be out much?" with a jealous pain in her voice.

"I am never willingly away from you, Rosamond, only I have not been to Fairleigh to stay for some time; there may be many demands on my leisure."

"Well, I will wait patiently and put up with the crumbs. I don't care to ask the Granvilles. I love them both dearly, but they are so very good and proper; and, oh, Hugh, I'm not at all good. I can't feel 'resigned' and 'thankful for my sorrow'."

He knew then she was thinking of the little grave which held all that remained of her first-born.

"The children might have eased your heart, dear; they were very fond of you."

"I couldn't bear it now," decided Rosamond. "Oh, Hugh, do you think I should miss my own darling the less because other children laughed and played in the home that was truly his?"

"Do you think it wise to be always thinking of the past?" he asked, a little reproachfully. "Darling, you have me left; cannot I comfort you for our child?"

"Yes! I am not really discontented, Hugh; bear with me a little, dear. But he was so harmless, so innocent, I cannot see why he was taken."

Not a month later that brokenhearted young mother believed she knew the reason, and thanked Heaven from the bottom of her heart that her darling had been taken from the evil to come.

"I wish the Desmonds had been in town," said Hugh, hoping to change the subject to one less sad. "I should like you to have renewed your acquaintance with them, Rosamond."

"They are abroad, Sir Reginald says."

"Yes, he's a nice fellow; quite deserves his good fortune in finding coal on his estate."

"Do you like him, Hugh?"

"He's a very pleasant fellow—a thorough gentleman, and always ready to go out of his way to make himself agreeable. As to liking him; he's well enough. I'm obliged to be civil to him because you snub him so."

"I prefer Lord Desmond a hundred times."

"Do you, dear? Then you'll be sorry to hear we shall have him for a near neighbour at Fairleigh; he goes down to Allerton next week."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER HOME COMING.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more—
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot on sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.

VERY, very mingled were Lady Fairleigh's feelings when her husband handed her out of the railway carriage at the remote station which, small as it was, was yet the nearest one to Fairleigh Court. She had something of every true wife's longing to see her husband's home. She could fully enter into Hugh's love for the Court, but she had also a strange uneasy feeling that this journey would bring her no happiness. She knew she had made it in defiance of her husband's secret wishes, and in consequence she dreaded to find in the grand old house some

silent confirmation of Sir Reginald's scandals, some proof that cause existed for the earl to keep his fair young wife a stranger to her home. Involuntarily she slipped her hand on his arm.

"I feel so frightened, Hugh."

He drew her a little closer.

"There is no need to be, Rosamond. We shall soon be at home. It is home, dear little wife, remember."

Their own carriage and horses had been sent from London, and were now in waiting. Beside the coachman, whom she knew, Rosamond caught sight of a tall, bronzed, bearded man, dressed something between a valet and a footman.

"You here, James?" exclaimed the earl, evidently surprised.

"Yes, please, my lord. Mrs. Ward sent me."

Was it Rosamond's fancy, or did a look of intelligence really pass between her husband and this servant? She could never quite determine.

"You had better see after the luggage, James," returned the earl, with assumed carelessness. Then, as the man hastened away, "How stupid of me. He won't know them, perhaps. I'll go and point them out." "What is wrong?" he said to his servant, when he had caught him up, and they were both out of Lady Fairleigh's hearing.

"She's awful, my lord," returned the man, respectfully but emphatically. "Mrs. Ward did think this morning of telegraphing to beg you to leave her ladyship"—jerking his thumb in the direction of the carriage—"in London and come on alone."

"I could not have done that," said Hugh, hastily. "It would have been impossible. What does the doctor say?"

"He begins to think, my lord, you won't be able to go on as you have been doing. You'll have to send her away."

"I can't do that; think of the exposure." The servant was silent; perhaps this reason did not weigh with him. He was a superior sort of man, and of one thing there could be no question, he was devoted to the Earl of Fairleigh.

"Mrs. Ward has got the crimson rooms ready, my lord; she wished me to tell you."

"The crimson rooms; the purple ones would have been better, James. All the Ladies Fairleigh have had them."

"She seemed to think, my lord, they were too near the—the wing. She's uncommon dangerous at times."

The two shes in this sentence it is almost useless to say referred to different persons. Lord Fairleigh went back to the carriage with a deeper gloom on his face. He took his seat by his wife in absolute silence.

"Hugh," cried Rosamond, when they neared the Court—"Hugh, haven't you a word of welcome for me?"

"Heaven bless my darling wife and make her happy here," he returned, solemnly.

Then they drove up the avenue to the grand entrance, and in the lovely twilight of the summer evening Rosamond had her first glimpse of her new home.

"It is lovely—lovely!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Hugh, why did you keep me away from it so long?"

"Then you think you shall like it?"

"Like it; I never saw anything so beautiful, Hugh. How can I ever thank you enough for this dear home?"

A look of intense affection passed over his face.

"By being happy here, Rosamond."

The carriage had stopped before the grand entrance now, and he assisted his wife to alight. As he stood with her on his arm, for one moment he forgot the difficulties of his position; for one moment he felt as though it were indeed a joyous homecoming, and rejoiced with pride at his wife's charms.

As he led her through the long file of eager servants he could see the admiration her beauty excited; could hear the murmur of approbation

on all sides. Then he led her through a long corridor to a pretty sitting-room bright with summer flowers.

"I will send Mrs. Ward to you, Rosamond."

The young wife privately thought her maid would have been a more desirable person, but she did not contradict his intention. When the door opened and the faithful Martha entered, Rosamond felt a strange sense of calm. If this prudent, trustworthy woman had been the mistress of the Court, the episode of the pink ribbon could hardly have occurred there.

"Welcome home, my lady," said Martha, respectfully. "It's a fine day that sees the master and his bride back at the Court. Many's the time, my lady, I've wondered if the old place would never be inhabited again."

"I wanted to come before," said Rosamond, simply. "How very beautiful it all is, Mrs. Ward."

There was a quiver in her voice, a moisture about her eyes which told their own tale to the old servant.

"Ah, my lady, don't go to grieve for the little boy," she cried, with respectful familiarity. "It's easy to see why you've stayed away so long. You couldn't bear to come home without him."

"I miss him more and more," sobbed Rosamond; "I miss him more, not less, every day."

Mrs. Ward took her mistress upstairs and pointed out the rooms she had prepared—a very pretty suite of four.

"I hope you will like them, my lady. Lord Fairleigh gave no instructions, and I thought these would be more cheerful."

"I like them very much," said Rosamond, thoughtfully. "Who had them last, Mrs. Ward?"

"I can hardly call to mind, my lady; some favourite visitor, I fancy. The late countess occupied the purple rooms, and she's been dead nearly thirty years."

"Fancy! Has there been no countess here for nearly thirty years? How forlorn it must have seemed."

Mrs. Ward could have told her another countess had lived beneath that roof for two long years, but she was a prudent woman, besides the will she also had the skill to keep the earl's secret.

Lady Fairleigh chose to wear white on this first evening of her arrival in her husband's ancestral home, a dress of purest, softest white, looped and trimmed with fresh, cool sprays of dark green ivy; very, very tasteful was this toilet.

"You look like the spirit of the waters," said the earl, coming in and finding her. "Well, young lady, and how do you like Mrs. Ward?"

"I am sure she is a faithful servant, Hugh, I like her very much."

"She is true as steel, I never found anyone so perfectly worthy of trust."

"I want you to take me all over the Court tomorrow, Hugh," said Lady Fairleigh, when the servants had retired and she sat toying with a peach.

"Willingly, Rosamond—indeed I should have been very vexed if you had made survey with any other guide."

This was strictly true, there were reasons which made him anxious to be with his wife, when she explored the Court, there was a secret hidden there he would fain keep from her. It was directly after breakfast that they set out to explore the grand old place.

Rosamond thought she had never seen so many curiosities as Hugh pointed out to her. At last they stopped before a suite of four rooms beautifully hung with purple, and fitted up in the daintiest fashion, with all which could charm a lady's eye.

"What beautiful rooms, Hugh; now what is their history? Of course they have a history or they would not be so beautifully arranged."

Hugh smiled; he often wished Rosamond had not been endowed with such an inquiring mind. His wife was not inquisitive, but she asked questions on any subject which came into her head with the utmost freedom.

"They have no history," returned the earl,

"they are perfectly modern as you see, they were fitted up thirty years and more ago for my aunt."

"What good taste she must have had. Why, Hugh, she must have been the last Lady Fairleigh."

Silence on that latter point.

"She had excellent taste; before her time the rooms were hung with heavy tapestry, I believe; according to tradition they have always been occupied by the Ladies Fairleigh, the crimson rooms we have used for guests."

"Why did we change, Hugh? I like these rooms much the best, they are so pretty."

"The others are much more healthy."

"Nonsense, Hugh, as if one part of a house could be healthier than another."

"It is a fact, dear."

"I should so like to change, Hugh; let us have these rooms, I should love to sit where all the dead and gone Ladies Fairleigh had lived before me."

"We'll ask Dr. Grey," said the earl, carelessly; "if he consents I'm sure I have no objection, it was his suggestion; he was up here yesterday, and assured Mrs. Ward it would be a much better arrangement."

"What a meddlesome, interfering man he must be."

"No, he's a nice old boy, there are few men I respect more than old Grey."

"Who was ill yesterday that he chanced to call?"

"I'm sure I don't know, one of the servants I expect."

When they had returned to the pretty morning room the earl rang the bell.

"Ask Mrs. Ward if she expects Dr. Grey this morning."

The man looked surprised, but soon returned.

"Mrs. Ward thinks he may look in about her lumbago, my lord; would your lordship like to see him?"

"Yes, certainly, send him in here."

"I never thought you had such absolute faith in doctors, Hugh," said his wife, with a broad smile, when the servant had disappeared. "Only fancy consulting one on which room you should choose to sleep in. Dr. Grey will think we have gone mad."

In about half-an-hour the doctor arrived—a simple, earnest man, the same who not so very long ago had disappointed Lady Fairleigh of her husband's escort to the opera. He came in promptly but with a certain ill-suppressed curiosity about him. He looked intently about him. Her husband performed the introduction.

"Welcome back to the Court, Lord Fairleigh, and the countess also. I hope it is not for her you have summoned me in, she does not look over and above strong."

"She has been too active in pleasure seeking," returned the earl, "and I have brought her down here to see what pure air and quiet will do for her."

"And you wish me to prescribe for her? I shall be most happy."

"You have not guessed our difficulty yet, doctor, we want to know if there is anything serious in your objection to the purple rooms, my wife has taken a strange dislike to the crimson ones."

"I haven't," a little indignantly. "Hugh, you tell the story all wrong; I merely said the purple ones were far prettier and I should like to use them."

Quick as thought the earl and the doctor exchanged glances.

"Lady Fairleigh has a will of her own," said the earl, laughing. "If you forbid her to occupy the purple rooms, it's ten to one she'd do it just the same."

Dr. Grey looked across the table at his patient with ready interest.

"Are you nervous, Lady Fairleigh?"

"I can hardly tell you, I am not strong."

"Ah, but are you nervous? If you saw an accident would it make an impression on you which you could not shake off for weeks?"

"Yes," said Rosamond, slowly, "I think it

would. I am no coward at any real, tangible danger, but I cannot bear suspense, the trial would upset me, I should worry myself so much waiting for something unpleasant to happen that I should have no strength left to resist it when it did come."

"I understand," returned the doctor. "I'm sorry to disappoint you, Lady Fairleigh, but you must keep to the crimson rooms, I am quite sure the purple ones would not suit you."

He looked meaningfully at her husband as though to intimate to him that he had something for his private ear, and the earl, who was quick to take a hint, rose and said he would walk as far as the Court gates with his visitor. Utter silence at first, then the elder man broke it.

"You must be very careful. It was a most unwise thing to bring your wife here at all."

"How could I help it?" said the earl, impatiently. "You'll own it's not pleasant to keep your wife out of your house, but I honestly did my best, and if Rosamond herself had not taken an extraordinary fancy to come here I never should have brought her."

"You could not send her away, I suppose?" was the unexpected suggestion.

"Hardly; she would not like it; besides," with an awkward laugh, "I don't think I could spare her, doctor—my Rosamond is something more to me than a countess to an earl."

"She has one of the loveliest faces I ever saw—I congratulate you with all my heart."

"Thanks," gratefully; then in another tone, "Doctor, what about that business below? Speak frankly."

"She will recover her health, but the mind grows more deranged every day. Lord Fairleigh, for your own sake—for your fair young wife's sake you ought to send this poor afflicted creature away."

"I cannot," hoarsely. "I have given my solemn promise that she shall live here always, and that I will do my utmost to conceal the truth for fear it should bring dishonour on our name."

The doctor looked grave.

"Giving such a promise was just like hanging a millstone round one's neck, not a bit better."

"I see it all now, but it was so different then, I never thought of marrying."

"Well, you have a beautiful excuse for your change of opinion."

"Do you think there is danger?"

"I believe if my patient and your wife came in contact she would tear her eyes out."

"I trust you exaggerate Bianca's fury, she is always calm with me."

"Because her love for you is the one redeeming point in her nature—pardon my plain speaking. Cunning as she is don't you suppose she will find out who is here, and when she hears it is your wife and knows that she has taken her name, her place, her honours, don't you think she'll do her utmost to escape and do the countess an injury?"

But Hugh would not think of such a thing.

"I will tell Susan and James to keep a sharp look-out. My wife and Bianca need never meet."

(To be Continued.)

BUSINESS PROVERBS.

NEVER sacrifice safety to large expected returns.

Never borrow money to speculate with.

Never make a loan or importunity.

Never lend a borrowing friend more than you are willing to lose if he can't pay.

Never speculate deeper than you are able to lose if you lose it all.

Owe no man anything.

Be satisfied with a moderate rent to a good tenant.

Keep well insured and watch your policy.

Never consult a man on business who does not manage his own.

As we sow in temporal affairs so we shall reap. Avoid a second mortgage for a fresh loan. He that maketh haste to be rich is not wise. Poverty is no bar to marriage if both parties will work and save.

The gods help those who help themselves, men or women.

God promises nothing to idleness.

A man must ask his wife if he may be rich.

Little coins, like little drops of water, will fill a bucket.

Short settlements make long friendships.

Fortunes are made by earnings and savings.

Money easily gotten is soon spent.

Money earned is money valued.

It is easier to loosen up good property than to re-establish it.

In discussing business disagreements keep cool.

Less wisdom is required to make money than to keep it securely when made.

THE INSEPARABLE FRIENDS.

LITTLE John Littlejohn, little Johnson Little, John Little, and John Little Johnson;

John Littlejohn's little John, and John Little Johnson,

And little John, and John Little Johnson's little John Little Johnson,

Were apparently one:

Because little John Littlejohn, little Johnson,

Little, John Little, and John Little Johnson,

John Littlejohn's little John, and John Little Johnson,

And little John, and John Little Johnson's little John Little Johnson,

Were always together,

In all sorts of weather,

Under the sun. H. N. F.

A RELIGIOUS KITTEN.

RECENTLY a little fellow, anxious to find a home for a pet kitten, where it would stand a right good chance of being well brought up, carried it to the residence of one of our clergymen, asking him, as he responded to the knock, if he would like a kitten.

"Oh, I don't know," said he; "what kind of a kitten have you got?"

"A Unitarian kitten, sir."

"No, not of that sort."

A few mornings after the little fellow appeared at the same door, rang the door-bell, and again found himself face to face with the "man of the house."

The boy repeated his offer of the juvenile feline.

"But aren't you the same boy that called the other day, and isn't this the same little Unitarian kitten you had then?"

"I know it," the little man responded; "it's the same kitten, but he's got his eyes open now, and he's an Episcopal kitten."

It is fair to surmise that the "opening of its eyes" proved the salvation of pussy, and found for it an agreeable and congenial home.

TWO WOMEN.

An æsthetic editor writes: I don't know why it is or how it is, but one woman steals over the senses like a bower of honeysuckles, twined with graceful tendrils and odorous blossoms; she is as harmoniously perfect throughout as a faultless vine or flowing gladiolus; there is no touch of colour or fold of drapery lacking; one would as soon think of adorning a rose bush with elephant's ears as to imagine any evolution of more

fitness in the perfect symmetry of form and colour. Another, with estimable qualities of mind and heart, looks like a Dutch farm yard in the country, with hollyhocks and sunflowers dabbled on with a tack hammer on the side of her head, the flat of her back, or where there is vacant space among the garden vegetables. Men and brethren, we cannot be expected to know why this is one wise, while that is otherwise. The same wise Creator that gives us apple blossoms gives us also onions, and we can only be silent and adore.

INGENUITY OF BIRDS.

A CURIOUS illustration of the practical good sense and ingenuity of some British birds is reported by a railway engine driver on one of the Scotch lines. He has noticed that certain hawks of the merlin, or "stone falcon," species, make use of the passing of the trains for predatory purposes. They fly close behind, near the ground, partly hidden by the smoke, but carefully watching for the small birds which, frightened by the train as it rushes roaring past, fly up in bewildered shoals. The merlins then, while the little birds are thinking more of the train than of lurking foes, sweep on them from the ambush of the smoke, and strike them down with ease. If they miss they return to the wake of the carriages and resume their flight and their hunt. They can, it seems, easily keep pace with an express train, and outstrip it when they please.

A FEMALE BUCCANEER.

DURING the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, while the Spanish war was in progress, a certain Lady Jane Killigrew, of Falmouth, England, with an armed party, boarded two Dutch vessels laden on Spanish account, which had been driven into Falmouth harbour by stress of weather, killed two Spanish merchants, and captured two barrels of pieces of eight. For this daring act the fair buccaneer and her associates were held to account by the public authorities. By the intervention of powerful friends and family connections the lady was saved from execution, though her more ignoble associates were hanged for the crime, lamenting, as Hals, a Cornish historian, tells us, "that they had not the company of that old Jezebel Killigrew at the place, and praying for a judgment upon her."

FEMALE PRIESTS IN AFRICA.

ONE of the most singular customs of Greybe, says an African traveller, is the admission of females into the order of priesthood. A young female, generally the daughter of a fetiche man, or priest, is selected for the purpose, who undergoes a probationary penance that continues six months previous to her admission into holy orders. During this period she is initiated by the priests into all the mysteries and chicanery of the religion of their forefathers, which consists of the worship of the black and white snake, and in the nummery of giving sanctity to bones, rags, etc.

When she appears in public during the period of her probation her manner is grave and solemn; her skin is painted with a kind of white clay; rows of shells, of various forms and sizes, are hung upon her neck, arms and ankles; and her loins are girt with long grass, which reaches to her knees. A dwelling is provided for her, in which she eats and sleeps alone, and into which none are admitted but fetiche men and women.

At the expiration of six months a large assemblage of men, women and children, accompanied by the various orders of priesthood

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and the musicians belonging to the town, takes place in an open space of ground, to assist at, and also to witness, the last grand ceremony. Soon after assembling the women form a circle by joining hands, among whom are the companions of the novitiate's youth, and also her relatives, who commence dancing circularly, reversing the movements alternately after making one complete circle.

The dancing is accompanied by the most barbarous and horrid din imaginable, caused by the musicians beating on drums, tomtoms, gongs, and blowing horns manufactured out of elephants' teeth and reeds; to which are added the most strange and uncouth grimaces and contortions of the faces and bodies of the priests, so that a spectator might easily imagine them to be a number of maniacs, who had been turned loose to give effect to the ceremony; and were it not for the presence of the little children who look on with fear and astonishment depicted in their countenances, would be no bad representation of Pandemonium.

The novitiate, after dancing commences, is brought out, by apparent force, from a little hut which had concealed her from the spectators, and placed in the centre of the circle formed, from which she endeavours to escape to the hut whence she had been brought, and this she is allowed to accomplish. This ceremony is repeated three times. An incantation is then delivered by the chief priests, and the farce ends. One of the chief conditions by which a female is admitted into the order of priesthood is that of leading a life of celibacy, and renouncing the pleasures of the world, and but few are permitted to enter it at all.

TIT FOR TAT.

We naturally resent being paid back in our own coin, especially if it has not quite the true ring. We can easily excuse ourselves for cheating a neighbour, but for him to do the same thing to us is an act not to be extenuated or condoned. To have the measure out of which we sell taken as the measure out of which to sell to us is very hard to bear. "I have weighed the two pounds of butter you sent me this morning," said an irate customer to a dealer in the above-mentioned article, "and am surprised to find that it is short weight just three ounces. If that is your way of dealing I must buy my butter somewhere else."

The butter merchant looked up surprised, but, without declaring his innocence, replied, "Well, that is very strange, because I put the two pounds of sugar I bought of you in the scales, and gave you the full weight in butter." To do as you are done by and to do as you would like to be done by seem to be very different things.

The sentiments of acrobats are not only revolutionary, but revaulting.

No man ever looked on the dark side of life without finding it.

The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear.

DAMPING down the floors of workrooms will reduce the thermometer several degrees.

Most people are like eggs—too full of themselves to hold anything else.

MR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN is engaged in composing a new cantata for the Leeds Festival, the subject and words being taken from Dean Milman's poem, "The Martyr of Antioch."

AMONG those present at the Court Ball the other day were two young Indian ladies, of tiny stature, who seemed much amused, and even joined in the dancing. They wore European costumes, of white tulle over satin, made with high bodices, the only mark of their Eastern extraction being their headdress, which consisted of bands of gold, from which large veils fell at the back of the head.

CECIL'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SHAMELESS JADE.

This is not home where these
Soiled footsteps mark the floors—
Where these shrill voices fill
The house with brazen merriment.

VICTORINE SALA, sitting in the elegant long drawing-room at West Leighton, that room with its Old World grace; its pale satin hangings; its antique, inlaid cabinets; its rare china; its portraits in panel of the family of the Foresters, that ancient family whose debts, duns and difficulties had driven them abroad, placed their lands and beautiful old house in the hands of the Jews, and thus three years back it had come with all its precious old carved oak furniture; its deep cellars, full of fine wines; its pictures; its plate; its books, into the possession of the millionaire French marquis, who thought no more of the thousands he paid for it than an ordinary man would think of buying a horse and trap.

The poor Foresters were away living under an alias in some cheap foreign city. Heaven only knew what they did for a living. They were a fine old Hertfordshire family, as the peasantry of the district said, and now a foreign nobleman was reigning in their stead.

Kate loved the pretty old faded drawing-room. She took a vast interest in the portraits in panel of the Foresters' ancestors which were painted full length in panels on each side of the room, and she greatly desired to know what the exiled family were doing; she would have liked to help them, to have given them money, but Kate had very little at her command. She found out that, magnificently rich as her husband was, he was not liberal.

Kate's "pin money" did not amount to much, considering that she was expected to clothe herself with splendour. This is a digression for which we suppose we must ask the reader's pardon, but nevertheless the digression is apropos of the subject.

Victorine Sala, the shameless actress, about whom men spoke slightly; Victorine Sala, the woman the sight of whom made women, who were at once haughty and virtuous, gather their skirts around them as they passed her, fearing contact with a creature so brazen, and so prosperous, so insolent, and so shameless; Victorine Sala was sitting in that old English country house as a guest; and positively she was talking with animation to two young gentlemen, sons of Sir Richard Grey, a baronet of the neighbourhood. They were fine manly fellows, who had seen little of the world beyond their college experiences and the winter festivities of their own neighbourhood, and they evidently thought the black-haired Victorine a marvellous creature when they noticed her rich, peculiar toilette, her beauty, much of which she owed to art, and the unexampled sang froid and vivacity of her manners.

There was also present a Lady Helen Flynn, a mighty huntress of that district, a handsome, masculine spinster of forty-five; and there was a Lady Dashwood, an exclusive county dame, with two pale, shrinking young daughters, whom she curbed and restrained most severely. This lady sat apart with dilating eyes. She had been in a carriage to the meet of the hounds, and the marquis had invited her to come sans ceremonie to dine at West Leighton in a friendly way.

Lady Dashwood was a prim widow, with slender means, and two pale, portionless daughters whom she was anxious to marry well. She accepted the invite; she drove to West Leighton; her carriage was put in the coachhouse, her ponies in the stable. She herself was shown, with her daughters, into a room, where Suzette, with the aid of a few beautiful flowers, helped them to make a little alteration in their toilettes; and then she had descended to the drawing-room to await the return of the lovely marquise, Kate.

Instead of that, she saw a woman with very black eyes, very red lips, very marked eyebrows, and what the ladylike widow considered a disgusting leering expression of face. Oh, if the marquise could only have known what kind of impression his idol made upon some people. This woman was introduced to Lady Dashwood as Mademoiselle Victorine Sala of the Folie Theatre, Paris.

It made no difference to Lady Dashwood that Victorine wore a bright dress of flaming ruby velvet, the richest that the looms of Genoa could manufacture; it added not to her charms that the buttons which fastened the costume were actually of opals set in brilliants, and worth half the ransom of a king.

Victorine's splendid sealskin cloak lay carelessly over a chair; she still wore her hat of seal with a rich crimson feather in it. Old point lace was about her throat, fastened with a single blazing diamond. Her figure was superb; her manner not full of repose so much as of a half-indolent power.

There she sat talking the veriest trash to those two young men, who had no eyes for Lady D.'s pale little daughters, and Lady Dashwood sat in a corner looking fierce and white, and quite unable to make up her mind if she should suddenly rise, call her daughters, and leave the house at once, for she had heard terrible things of Victorine.

Kate took in the whole situation at a glance—Lady Dashwood's prim face of horror, the timid looks of the two girls, that awful insolence and air of being at home of Victorine, the boyish wonder on the faces of the two young men, the grim, sarcastic humour on that of Lady Helen Flynn, who liked to study character, and was amused as much by the world's wickedness as by its follies; and she felt a sort of helpless conviction that among all these people there was not one who would really be a help in time of need.

"I must help myself," she said to herself. "And, oh! I feel so ill."

She bowed vaguely to all those assembled; she had not yet taken off her outdoor wraps; she looked abstractedly in the direction of her husband; his eyes were fixed on Victorine. Then she crossed noiselessly over the thick carpet, and bowing still vaguely to her guests, she laid her hand gently on her husband's arm and said, with authority:

"I am ill; come and speak to me, Henri!"

Oh, the look he gave her—savage, scowling, furious.

"If you are ill call your maid; I will apologise for you. Go to bed; the dinner can be served without you!"

"I would remain if I were dying!" she said, in a choked voice. "But tell me, when did she arrive?"

"She is acting at Hereford; she has joined a travelling company—Miss Emily Alder's company—but she will remain here until Monday, when she is going to act."

"She will not remain in this house!"

Kate's voice rose to an hysterical sob.

"You will oblige me by not making a scene here," said Henri, with a terrible smile. "Either do the honours to your guests or retire!"

"Honours to the wretch who strove to murder me!"

He smiled—oh, such a cruel smile—and then he walked forward and bowed with his courtly grace to all his guests.

"Madame la Marquise," said he, "feels terribly indisposed; she cannot remain to dine; she begs me to apologise for her."

But Kate would not thus be driven away. She made up her mind to remain and watch Victorine Sala. Poor child, in hoping to measure her strength against that of her insolent, wicked rival, she was like a timid bird who should attempt to fight with the fowler who has en nered it.

"Not at all, dear Lady Helen, Lady Dashwood, and you gentlemen," nodding and smiling at the two young sons of Sir Richard; "I had no such thought. The marquise fancies I

am ill, when in truth I am only a little tired. I shall return in a very few minutes."

Anybody who had taken the trouble to watch the face of Victorine Sala would have seen a scowl, ominous and hideous, contract her brows. She looked terrible for the space of a moment, and then she was soon laughing again at something that one of the baronet's sons said to his brother. Her white teeth gleamed; her black eyes sparkled. She said, with the prettiest French accent:

"You are two naughty boys. I see that I shall indeed have to teach you manners. You will visit here often while I remain, will you not?"

"Every day if the marquis and marquise permit," one of the young men answered.

"And how long, mademoiselle, can you spare from your charming avocations to give to your friends in an English country house?" asked Lady Helen, with a deep, hoarse laugh.

That merry lady's eyes twinkled—to her it was the best joke in the world that a foreign marquis should actually bring a bold jade of a French actress into his country house without his wife's leave, and introduce her to all the elite of the county.

Lady Helen was a lady of strong health and robust mind, without a spark of what she called sentiment about her. She had been cruelly jilted in her youth, and she had resented that bitter circumstance since on every human creature with whom she came in contact—not that she would have injured or wronged anybody, but she had an ugly habit of not believing in anybody's goodness or anybody's sufferings.

She thought Lady Dashwood's primness and prudery detestable; she thought the bold wickedness of Victorine so infamous that she would have liked to revive a brutal old law and have her whipped at a cart's tail all through the county; she thought the young Greys idiotic boys, and the marquis a villain of the first water, whose wealth and rank alone preserved him from the gallows; but she had not an atom of pity for Kate.

"She does not manage the fellow as a woman of sense and spirit would manage him," she said. "She is not a woman of sense and spirit, she is a sentimental noodle. I have no sympathy with sentimental noodles."

Lady Helen was still a fine woman at forty-five, with a clear complexion, pink, healthy cheeks, bright grey eyes, an upright, plump figure, and brown curly hair just tinged with silver, which she brushed well and wore short like a man's.

She was going to sit down to dinner in her riding-habit, for the marquis, for some reason known to himself, had invited all the people he happened to know at that memorable meet of the hounds to return with him to an impromptu dinner to the noble old country house of West Leighton.

It was in reality because he wished to bring Victorine in with a crowd of other persons in that way. There would be nothing so very remarkable in his asking her first to dinner, and then to prolong her stay for a few days. Well, he must have known the horror which the sight of her would give to Kate, his young wife; but then he knew that she could not very well express this horror before a number of strangers, and if once the young marquise could be made to preside at her own table, when Victorine was one of the guests, anything that she might say or do afterwards against that fascinating actress would lose half its point, and very likely numbers of people would not believe half she said.

Thus when Kate came into the room, in less than ten minutes, having merely bathed her eyes, smoothed her hair, and thrown a white lace scarf over her dark silk dress, a gleam of satisfaction shone in the blue eyes of the marquis, and was met by an answering smile on those red, cruel lips of Victorine.

Lady Dashwood fanned herself vehemently, and wondered what it all meant. It was odd that the marquise did not turn that creature out, as she, Lady Dashwood, said to herself that she would have done had she been in her place.

People often exclaim at the stupidity and weakness of those who are placed in situations of difficulty, because they themselves are so secure from the like troubles; they actually take credit to themselves for being in happier circumstances, and blame ill-used sufferers like Lady Kate for not doing quite impossible things.

For with a man of the temperament of this French marquis, whose mind was already poisoned against his wife, and with a woman of the nature of this terrible Victorine, who was as determined as she was inhuman, who joined love of greed to the savage instincts of the wild beast, who with her sensuous beauty, and perfect physical health, nerves of steel and keen brain, was a match for almost any man under the sun, with two persons like these to deal with, we repeat, it was quite impossible that Lady Kate could do as she liked.

How did the dinner pass off? Lady Helen and Lady Dashwood and her two daughters would have said admirably; for the cooking was perfect, the pastry and fruit delicious, the wines superb. Lady Dashwood, a poor widow with two portionless daughters, never dined sumptuously, or even daintily at home. The marquis was a wise man of the world; he paid all kinds of polite attentions to the prim widow and her pale daughters, also to Lady Helen; and all the while Victorine laughed and showed her white even teeth, and her great black eyes glittered, and her French accent made her words sound prettily, like tinkling silver bells, in the ears of those ladies; while, as for the two young Greys, they were perfectly enchanted with the wonderful French actress of whom they had heard so much.

And Kate, the wife, the mistress of the noble country house, if she had been a sensible woman, or had possessed a spark of spirit, she ought to have turned the hussey out if she really did not want her there; but she came to the table and sat there simpering as if nothing was the matter the whole time.

That was what Lady Helen said to her intimates afterwards, and Lady Dashwood shook her head and said she really did not know how to understand people; that Victorine seemed well enough in her way, though of course it was quite impossible for her to understand how a woman in the position of the marquise could possibly have received her into her house.

Poor Kate! truly this world's sympathy is a pitiable thing, a poor mean uncharitable compound, and decidedly not worth having.

"I will turn her out when these people are gone, but it is impossible until then," said Kate to herself.

She rose at length and gave the signal to the other ladies. The marquis himself sprang up and opened the door for them to pass out. He would not even look at his wife as she went by, but Kate turned her head—she could not help it—as Victorine came out into the hall, and she saw the marquis seize her hand and press it passionately to his lips. Her head reeled, her heart seemed turned to stone, her woman's pride seemed trodden in the dust. She was weak in health, and, rich, lovely, titled as she was, she felt as if she had not one friend in the wide world.

As for Victorine, she walked on into the drawing-room, with her train sweeping after her, her insolent, handsome head up, and a smile of triumph on her wicked face. As for the other ladies, they had not seen the transaction, or were supposed not to have seen it, which came to pretty much the same thing; but in reality that sarcastic Lady Helen knew all about it.

Kate sank into a luxurious seat in the drawing-room. It was close to the fire, which burnt brightly, for the spring evenings were chilly. Victorine threw herself with an air of luxurious abandon upon a low silken couch, and leaning back amid the great cushions, she examined the illustrations in that week's "Graphic," which lay close to her hand on a carved rosewood table. And she paid not the slightest attention to either of the other ladies. Lady Helen lay back in a chair equally luxurious.

"If you ladies do not object," said the huntress, "I will go to sleep for ten minutes. I have

been in the saddle to-day for five consecutive hours; also I have dined admirably," and she closed her eyes.

Lady Dashwood, with her daughters, was examining some rare golden coins kept under a glass case in one of the cabinets.

"How long the gentlemen are in making their appearance," cried Victorine, at length, and she dashed down the "Graphic." "I get so tired of being only with ladies. It is shocking, I know, but it is what one has been used to."

"Bless me," said Lady Helen, and she awoke with a start; "is the world come to an end?"

"It would do that for me if I were compelled to lead a dull life," said Victorine. "I was saying how long those gentlemen are in coming upstairs. We have need of them," she added, in her pretty French accent, "to cheer us up."

"Your life is a cheerful one, Mademoiselle Sala?" asked Lady Helen.

"Ma foi, yes. I should become insane without excitement. I have accepted an invitation to remain here for a month or so, and I tell Henri—the marquis and I are old friends—that he must fill the house with guests. We must have private theatricals—we must be as gay as larks. I would rather live a short life and a merry one than a long, pale, colourless one. I wonder some very dull, proper people don't go mad, and I fancy they do."

As she spoke she glanced at Kate in an evil and ironical fashion. How is it that there are times when we are tongue-tied—and that at moments when it is most necessary that we should find utterance? Kate knew that she ought to have risen to her feet then and there when Victorine made that insolent assertion that she was invited to remain at West Leighton for a month.

She knew that she ought to have stood up and to have given the shameless jade the falsehood, but words would not come at her bidding—only weak and foolish words, and she felt ill and her head ached fearfully, and she realised if she attempted to speak she should break into miserable and helpless weeping, and she said to herself:

"No, I cannot speak now; when these other women are gone and I have her here alone I will make her go, but I so hate a scene before these strangers—that mocking Lady Helen will be so amused. I am not going to, act a scene for her benefit."

And then voices and gay laughter were heard outside, and the two young Mr. Greys came in as gay as larks. Coffee and confectionery were then brought in; and there were a hum and a buzz of many voices. Kate saw all these people in her own drawing-room like phantoms in a dream through a mist; she did not know at all what they were saying, she could not understand a word.

Soon a deadly faintness came over her and she knew nothing more. When she came to her senses she was in her own luxurious room lying on her own bed, the lights burnt low, and Suzette, her faithful young maid, sat beside her watching.

"Suzette, where have I been—what has happened? Was I thrown out of the carriage? What has happened? Tell me. Ah! now I recollect, it was last evening there were guests; tell me their names."

"There were Lady Helen, your ladyship, and the two Greys, and the two Miss Dashwoods, and Lady Dashwood."

"Ah, there was somebody else—an actress from Hereford—was there not, Suzette?"

"Yes, my lady," the girl answered, reluctantly.

"I remember it all now. Oh, Suzette, I was taken ill so suddenly—I fainted, did I not?"

"Oh, yes, my lady, and they rang the bell and I came, and we called the housekeeper, and we put smelling-salts to your nostrils and a cold sponge to your temples; but you only moaned, your eyes were still closed, so the footmen—two of them—carried you up here as easily as if you had been a baby, and when they were gone the housekeeper and I undressed you and laid you in bed, and we have sent for the doctor."

"And the guests, Suzette?"

"They are gone, my lady," was the reply.
 "What, all of them, Suzette?"
 "Yes, all of them, my lady," said Suzette, boldly.

Though she was telling a lie she told herself that it was a white lie, told with the good intention of giving her mistress peace and a good night's rest, for the ladies—that is, Lady Helen and the Dashwoods—had all talked loudly in the servants' hearing of Victorine the actress, and of how weak the marquise was not to turn her out at once; and Suzette, who knew that the actress was at that very moment in the house playing *coarté* with the marquis, smoking cigarettes and drinking champagne, Suzette knew that a deadly wrong was being done to her mistress, and that it was the consciousness of that wrong that made her ill.

"Has the actress gone, Suzette?"

"Yes, my lady; the marquis, when he found that you were so ill, said he would not have any guests, and he sent mademoiselle away in the same carriage that is gone to fetch the doctor."

"If that is true," said Kate to herself, "my husband will come and see me."

But the doctor came and prescribed quiet and the most nourishing food for the marquise, bowed gravely, and took his departure; and the night waned and the young wife watched and still her husband did not come near her. She sank off at last into an uneasy, unhappy doze, and so passed a night of starting and confused dreams.

When morning dawned she was feverish, thirsty, with parched lips and a dry throat, and a dull aching in the head. Suzette stood close to her with a cup of tea upon a tray.

"Here is some delicious cream, dear lady, and will you have an egg?"

"No, nothing, only lemonade. Suzette, tell the marquis he must come to me."

Suzette gave her mistress the lemonade, and then left the room. She looked anxiously towards the door, but the marquis did not come.

This was the scene that was being enacted between the master of West Leighton and Victorine Sala, the actress: they were seated in the large pleasant library of West Leighton, a room furnished in pale blue damask, and light wood, to relieve the heavy effect of the tiers on tiers of volumes, the valuable library that had once belonged to the exiled family of the Forestiers; there was a large bay window which commanded a splendid view of a portion of the flower garden, a bit of the park, and a rich sylvan country of wood and water, dale and mountain beyond; the wide panorama was brilliantly lighted up by the sun.

This room was a favourite one of Kate's, because it was light and cheerful. She used to say that when the baby came she and the marquis were looking for, that when the little heir of all their wealth and honours could crawl about and play with his toys, this would be the room where she would like to bring him as she sat at work on fine summer mornings.

And now behold there are seated at breakfast in this charming room, with its blooming flowers in great china vases, its delicate antique furniture, its glorious window view of a smiling countryside, the Marquis de St. Germaine and Victorine the actress. They had indeed finished their luxurious breakfast when we steal in upon them and take notes of their sayings and doings. Victorine lounges back in a soft chair, as is her custom whether she is tired or not tired, and the marquis watches her while she is lazily looking through the window at the prospect.

"So you will stay here, Victorine, and in preference to the fine chateau in Italy filled with all the rarest curiosities, the most exquisite statues and marbles, the richest gems of art. Bellina is in the Riviera, not ten miles from Nice. You shall have a title—titles can be purchased for money; your house will be filled with the gayest visitors. It is the life of a goddess, or a queen of fairyland, that I offer you. I too shall be with you. I shall lie at your feet, your slave, as you have made me from the beginning."

"At my feet," the woman answered, with a languid smile of contempt, "and pray how long

would you remain there? You would soon spread your wings and fly away like any other butterfly pleasure seeker, for you are nothing else, my lord marquis, if once I, as you phrase it, consented to make you happy."

"Victorine, your heart is of marble. You know that I adore the ground on which you walk, the flower you have worn in your glorious hair; you know that if there is no day of melting your obdurate soul I shall become mad."

She laughed scornfully.

"Yes, now," she said, "while I have not consented to take up the splendid shame of becoming your mistress as my share of the good things of this life. No, my good friend, what I require is an assured position, not one that I shall hold at your caprice."

"I will buy you the title of Countess of Bellina, I will settle the chateau upon you and the lands thereof and all it contains on you and your heirs for ever. What is it you really covet—wealth and position? As for my love you spurn it."

"I don't know what love is," said handsome Victorine, with her hard smile. "I think it is the offspring of an impaired digestion or a kind of fever of the blood in the young and strong; I have a splendid digestion, and my blood is as cold as ice. I have never been in love, but I am ambitious; I wish to drive in the park by your side, to ride in the Row with you; I wish countesses to bow to me as they now bow to that pale thing upstairs; I wish to be the Marquise de St. Germaine, and one day the Duchess of Montalbert—and nothing less will satisfy me."

Henri looked on the ground, and he became deadly white.

"Victorine, that day in the Swiss Alps you—"

He paused.

"I tried to push her over the rocks, I wish that I had succeeded," she said, with a deadly smile.

Henri looked up at her, his blood boiled, his heart raged for her, he was mad for love of her, and yet he asked himself if she were not some demon incarnate.

"You would never have slept afterwards," he said, slowly.

She laughed.

"I see that evidently your digestion is not perfect as mine is," she said, "or you would not speak so. I believe in nothing, I fear nothing, I hope for nothing that is not material."

"What do you propose to do?" he asked, after a pause.

"To stay here to tire her out. The more she orders me away the more firmly will I root myself; she will die of spite, especially if I am here when her child is born."

The marquis arose and threw up the window and put his head out into the fresh spring morning. Great Heaven! was he so base as to consent that this woman should remain in his home and murder his wife by breaking her heart? And the child? If a boy, the lawful heir of his time-honoured name, the future Duke of Montalbert, would the infant's life be safe in the same house with Victorine?

No, Kate must go away to the London town house if possible. Good heavens, was it really a fact that unless he made Victorine his wife she would never submit to his will? And then he heard the voice of the temptress in his ear.

"I believe we could easily find grounds for you to divorce your wife if we looked for them."

He came into the room again, shut the window, folded his arms, and looked hard at Victorine.

"It can't be, she is too cunning—I have watched, she never has a letter, she never meets anyone."

"She did!"

"Ah! once in Switzerland; I have heard of it from her maid, but there has been no guilt."

Victorine shrugged her shoulders and put up her red lips in scorn.

"I know she loves him in her heart," said the marquis, "and that makes me less tender of her feelings. Yes, stay on here, Victorine, if you will."

For the poison was working—Henri was beginning to doubt Kate.

And the days went on, while Kate lay upstairs ill and feverish. She could not sleep well, she could not eat, her strength seemed gone. She was well attended to, for every servant in the house loved her, and they and the doctor conspired to hide from her the fact, which was now notorious throughout the whole of the countryside, that Victorine Sala was living in the house, riding and driving every day with the marquis; but she still maintained the respectable position of a mere visitor at the mansion, and when the marquis spoke of his wife as being glad to have mademoiselle in the house nobody could contradict him, because whatever Lady Helen and the Dashwoods might think, all they could say was that the marquise had received mademoiselle as a guest at her dinner-table, and had heard her announce her intention of stopping a month at West Leighton without offering any opposition.

And so perhaps it was all true, though it certainly was the most extraordinary conduct; but the marquise was evidently a sentimental young lady, who had been flattered on account of her beauty, and who did not care very much perhaps what her husband did, seeing that she must have a host of admirers elsewhere, and so on.

Thus the world talked while Kate lay ill upstairs, and meanwhile Victorine was not the only visitor at West Leighton. She did not care enough for the marquis to enjoy his society alone; she liked actors and actresses, people of her own stamp, and she liked to show off before them to display her power over the great man, so she made him invite a Mademoiselle Nixon, a Jersey girl, bold as brass, and with those pink and white plump charms that usually develop into excessive embonpoint in maturer years.

This Nixon was already a favourite with a certain class on London boards. She sang and danced in burlesque attire in the scantiest drapery that the Lord Chancellor permits. She was loud and vain, and greedy of gain, and of presents, and of rich food and good wines. She was vulgar throughout, vulgar in mind, vulgar in manners, vulgar, despite her pink peony style of beauty, in appearance. Victorine wanted her to act as her champion, perhaps it would be more correct to say as her bully, in case of any opposition, say from the parents or friends of Kate, not to speak of the delicate, unhappy young marquise herself.

Besides this Nixon there was a handsome Italian baritone from the opera, named Manuel Gillotti, invited; two very dashing Guards officers, men of title both of them, married men both of them—separated from his wife one of them, divorced from his for his own sins the other.

Lords Elwyn and Donora were the glory, or the shame, of the London clubs; they came joyfully at the bidding of the marquis to spend their time amid actresses whose photographs were to be seen at that time in Regent Street—photographs of pretty young women attired in the shortest of short skirts, and the lowest-cut bodices that fashion permits in these days of general improvement and æsthetic tastes.

Thus the house was filled with a strange company. They were told the young marquise was not well and kept to her own rooms. The Guardsmen, who had been told that the young lady was beautiful, wondered if it was true that she was ill, or if she were only sulky; they had both of them treated their wives very much as Henri was treating his, but, with the inconsistency of human nature, they told each other that they felt sure he was rather hard on this poor, pretty little girl at whom they longed to get a peep.

And all this while, some fortnight now, Kate was upstairs, and the doctor came and went; she grew a little stronger, the feverishness left her, her appetite returned. The weather was splendid—they were on the skirts of May. Kate sat up dressed at the open window, partaking with some appetite of an omelette and a cup of coffee—it was about ten in the morning.



[FORBIDDEN LOVE.]

Twice every day her husband came to see her, and stayed with her exactly five minutes; his heart ached, his conscience worried him as a hound worries a fox whenever he looked on the pale, sweet face, which always lighted up with smiles when he entered.

On the morning of which we write Kate had a faint, delicate tinge on her fair cheeks; she wore a peignoir of pale blue silk that harmonised exquisitely with her lovely complexion. When the marquis entered and looked at her his heart smote him as it had not smitten him for years—conscience will speak in the worst or almost the worst of us; natures like Victorine's do seem exempt, but a thoroughly wicked woman is worse than the worst man—so say the wise ones.

"Henri," said Kate, "had you visitors in the house last night? I felt sure I heard the piano and a man's voice singing, and after that the sound of many feet like dancing."

"You have sharp ears," he said, with a smile. "Yes, I have a few friends: Gillotti, from the opera, and Lords Elwyn and Donore."

"No women?"

She did not say ladies—how was that? Her tone was a trifle sharp and imperious. Henri's terrible temper rose, his conscience ceased to upbraid him.

"You don't expect me to lead the life of a monk while you are ill up here?"

She did not answer; a dread suspicion crossed her mind: Victorine was in the house—Victorine, who had tried to murder her; and her husband loved this woman still as madly as he had loved her in the days that were gone.

"And now he wishes me dead, he must—he does, that he may marry her. And they will poison me. I wonder that has not been done before. I see what I must do—I must leave; it is useless to talk of standing my ground and turning this wretch out; I have not the strength. I must leave if she is in the house. But they have all told me falsehoods; I am sure they are all in league against me. Yes, even Suzette, for has she not told me all the time that

Victorine was not here? I must go—I will go to London, to the town house of my mother. I know they are there, I do not even care if they are angry, for they are bound to receive me and be good to me when they hear that my house is invaded by this creature and her set. In fact, I feel that I must leave, for if I remain they will poison me."

She was in terrible inward excitement, though she spoke no words just then, but only arose and walked up and down the room; and then Suzette entered. She looked at her fixedly.

"Suzette, the marquis has just gone. You did not tell me that Gillotti the singer was here, and the two Guardsmen, and—Victorine Sala."

"I, my lady, I thought you would not like—you were ill, my lady, I—"

Kate smiled bitterly.

"It is of no consequence," she said. "I want you to pack a few of my things in a small basket, just my night clothes and clean collars and toilette necessities—I am going away for a few days."

Suzette looked at her in amaze.

"Oh, no, my dear lady; consider your state of health. You must not, indeed I can't, I won't help you to do anything so mad. Wait, all will come well; write to the countess your mother to come here."

Henri de St. Germaine had only walked into the inner room. Kate, in her confusion and excitement, fancied that he had gone out to the landing and had taken his departure. Now he strode into the room in a desperate rage, the proposal of Suzette drove him mad.

"If you do," he said, "if you send for your mother, and if she come, here I will show her the door, hand her out to her carriage and bang the door in her face. I tell you I have always done exactly as I liked, and I will to the end."

"That is enough," said Kate. "I will go."

At that very moment the doctor was announced. Instantly the marquis recovered his composure and self-command.

"The marquise," said he, with a light laugh,

"talks of going all the way to London—surely, doctor, you forbid it?"

"It would be sheer madness," said the doctor, alarmed. "She would in all probability be taken ill in the train. Oh, my dear lady, don't dream of such a thing until the auspicious event comes off for which we are all so anxious."

"You hear?" said the marquis. "Now, my dear Kate, let me not hear again of this freak."

The doctor allowed Kate, however, that day to take a drive. She went alone, quite alone, but her mind was made up; she knew the hours at which the various trains started for London from the nearest station, a little country one called Chickerton, about seven miles from West Leighton. She went to the wardrobe drawers and gave a longing look at all the exquisite little robes and caps, and soft flannels, and lace-trimmed night and day dresses prepared for the expected tiny heir.

"I will send for them, they will be obliged to forward them and my things also," she said, with a sob. "I will leave this house for ever. I will lock up my jewel box and take the key, and see what money I have. I have twelve pounds—oh, quite enough for the journey. I only want my night clothes."

The carriage came round and she was led downstairs by Suzette and the housekeeper; her little parcel containing her night clothes and brushes she had concealed under her fur cloak. It was a lovely morning, about twelve o'clock, when she started in the pretty carriage drawn by prancing horses. She would not let Suzette accompany her.

"Drive me to Chickerton," she said to the coachman.

And when, after an hour's drive, they reached the station Kate saw that the train would start in five minutes, and she leaped out.

"I am going," she said, abruptly; "tell Suzette I will send for my things."

She took her ticket, her place, and was whirled off to—where?

(To be Continued.)



[A DAUGHTER'S GRATITUDE.]

THE THREE BLACK DOVES.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

CHAPTER I. RETROSPECTION.

"CONFOUND the shabby rascals, to mislead a fellow on a night like this. Where the deuce I have wandered to I can't conceive. Dear Norah, how uneasy she must feel at my protracted absence. Ah, well! I'm not so sure but that I am not rather glad of this mishap than otherwise, for the thought that we are in danger always gives us additional value in the eyes of those who love us, enhances the joy of meeting (selfish ruffian that I am), yet I would not for the life of me that the dear girl should suffer a single pang. Ah, it is something, after all, to possess the pure love of a fond heart in this dreary world."

Such was the soliloquy uttered by a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, whose beauty lay rather in the winning intelligence of his genial, open countenance than in any perfection of feature.

He was the son of the rich land-owner, John Renfrew, and Pierce had been suddenly recalled from Oxford, where he had been to complete his studies. The lady in question, Norah Cavanagh, a beautiful girl of some eighteen or nineteen summers, was Mr. Renfrew's orphan niece, and Pierce's affianced bride.

It was a bleak November night, a night of wind, sleet and rain, and the young traveller, through being misdirected, had for hours been trying to find his way out of a lonely, unfrequented pass, in the western extremity of the county of N—.

This after a long and laborious excursion across the chain of mountains that skirt the county, through the snow which had fallen incessantly during the day, and almost choked the only path that led through the gloomy ravine, and the dark abysses of water, or bogs, that invaded the unprotected precincts of the path.

Sometimes he was precipitated into spectral bushes, robed in snow, and at others into masses of loose rocks, crested with the white flake. However, he succeeded, after many difficulties, in gaining the door of "The Three Doves."

It was shut. The windows were all closed, and Pierce would have despaired of obtaining entrance but for a faint red light which occasionally shot across the windowless aperture beside the sign board that swung whistling in the wind.

"Who's there?" demanded a strong, harsh voice.

Pierce looked up, and as well as the light of a rush candle, which the figure held in his hand, would permit, observed a man's head projecting from the aperture beside the sign. He wore a thick woollen nightcap. In one hand he held a capacious tin can, to protect the rush, glimmering from the wide mouth of a bottle, which he held in the other hand, and which flickered and wavered ominously in the wind.

The rain, hail, and snow pattered piteously upon the can, and threatened immediate extinction to the feeble light, while the ponderous signboard, as it ever and anon swayed by the wind, struck violently against its master's face.

What with the annoyance which this worthy proprietor felt from Pierce's unseasonable application, the tempestuous state of the elements, and the awkward evolutions of the board, his colloquy with the benighted youth, and the other objects of his resentment served not a little to dissipate Pierce's sensation of fatigue.

Again he cried lustily:

"Who's there?"

"A stranger," replied Pierce, "who desires refreshment and rest."

"And isn't this a pretty night to come looking for a bed to any decent man's house? Go along out of that, and tell me who you are, and what brought you here at this time of night? Do you think I keep open house for the like of you? Go away from my door, I tell you, till I get up and see who you are. Can't you see the wind is blowing out my light? Och! Isn't it a wonderful wet night entirely?"

The worthy Ryan Flemming shortly appeared at the door. Slowly, but fully, did the portals of "The Three Black Doves" open, and Ryan, the proprietor, stood in the light of his rush before the young man. His feet were bare, and he was only partially dressed. In his left hand he still held the rush, and in his right the can, which he now applied to the office of protecting the almost imperceptible flame from the rushing of the wind.

"Why, then, you poor starved owl, what tempted you out on such a night as this, and where are you come from? And did you think you'd get a night's lodging in this dissolute, lonely place? Stir up the fire, Judy, for the poor cratur's fairly lost with the cold."

Pierce accepted the invitation, walked into the kitchen, or taproom, and was soon seated beside a comfortable fire, accompanied by a glass of the illicit, which shortly made him forget what he had suffered on his journey.

"What is this place called?" inquired Pierce.

"'The Three Black Doves,'" returned a middle-aged woman, who sat in a corner smoking a short, dingy pipe, and about whose face there were still traces of a certain wild sort of beauty. "And it's the only house that—"

"Wouldn't it be fitter for you," suddenly interrupted Ryan, who had again fastened the door for the night, "wouldn't it be fitter I say for you to be preparing your soul than spoiling this gentleman's appetite with yer dirty pipe? Go to bed, Judy, and say yer beads."

The woman shook her head, and there seemed to be a mystery about her, which, coupled with the abrupt rebuke of the host, excited a strong curiosity in Pierce's mind. In spite of her poverty-stricken appearance, she yet maintained an imperturbable dignity, a strange air of contempt and indifference.

When she fixed her eye, you naturally shrank under the palpable influence of its eagle glare, and the reckless placidity of her attitudes seemed to proceed from that abstracted importance which you would suppose an acquaintance with the events of other world's calculated to produce.

Ryan, however, allowed little time for reflection upon this singular being, and drawing a chair to a large table, backed and worn into fantastic inequalities of surface, he requested the young traveller to be seated.

There was nothing particularly ferocious about Ryan. He was apparently a merry, good-hearted fellow; but you felt that he was a man whom you could not trifle with. His face was a legible index to gauger-hunting, illicit distillation, and the persecution of tithe proctors. But these were not crimes of constitution, but of necessity and circumstances; you had no apprehension when he stood before you that you beheld an assassin or a house-breaker, yet you would instinctively avoid provoking his resentment.

Pierce sat down to supper, and as he had travelled far he had a relish for his fare, ate cheerfully, and looked contented. His meal was despatched in silence, which he was not unwilling to attribute to respect and attention on the part of his entertainers; but his curiosity concerning the strange woman induced him to turn towards where she sat, when he perceived Ryan making strange signs, with which she seemed perfectly conversant, and replying herself through the same medium, with caustic and dissatisfied looks.

The subject of their conference seemed to relate to Pierce, and his nerves were not exactly in a state to fit him for promptitude or decision, he therefore hastily asked for a candle, and desired to be shown to his sleeping-room, determined to leave them and his suspicions behind. Ryan immediately went to fetch a candle, and Judith, taking advantage of his absence, cautiously approached, and in a suppressed tone of voice exclaimed:

"I charge you by the Cross to quit the house—your life is on a thread—he means you no evil, but he cannot avert it. I charge you by the Holy Cross, to be gone!"

The earnestness and impressiveness of her manner obtained the young man's acquiescence in a moment.

"I do not understand you," replied Pierce, with a bored look, "but I am willing to believe you mean me a service; lead me to the road, and you shall be rewarded."

She was preparing to obey his instructions when the last word caught her ear. She turned suddenly and scowled upon him with a look of ineffable contempt; but, not diverted from her purpose, she held the light and walked towards the passage leading to the outer door.

Their intention, however, was scarcely formed when the sound of Ryan's feet coming down the stairs reminded Pierce that there might be more hazard in ineffectually attempting to escape than in braving the dangers, whatever they might be, which awaited him. So changing his resolution as quickly as it was adopted, he hastily returned to the kitchen, and resumed his former place.

Again he was tormented by dark suspicions and the painful grimaces and significant expressions of Judith, who sat in the chimney corner in the same attitude as when we first introduced her. Pierce seized a candle in a fit of abstraction, and rushed without a guide to his sleeping apartment, which stood at the head of a narrow and crazy flight of stairs apart from the kitchen.

Apprehensions of an alarming nature prompted the young traveller to examine every crevice of the room; he felt the walls cautiously, expecting the points of pikes, muskets, or swords

to burst from their concealment. The window, the floor, the furniture, everything in the apartment in fact, underwent as rigid an examination as a bale of suspected goods under the hands of a revenue officer; yet he could discover nothing to justify suspicion, or satisfy curiosity.

A room so antiquated, and yet so plain, it had never been Pierce's fate to sleep in before. It was thinly wainscoted all round, a circumstance very unusual in such houses in Ireland, and divided in various recesses or niches, which seemed to have been originally appropriated to purposes that had long ceased to exist.

The window was in a deep and massive framework of solid oak, rudely carved, upon which strange initials and sundry unaccountable devices had been scratched and cut by visitors. Over the mantelpiece a solitary plate of glass, serving as a mirror, was fastened by two enormous nails, and on the opposite side a few yellow ragged engravings after the peculiar school of the village artists were hung in the admirable relief of the cream-coloured wainscot. The seats were modern and shabby, with the exception of a dignified old armchair, which stood alone in a corner as if its weightiness disdained to mingle with the attenuated forms that were falling to pieces around it.

The bed was placed with its head in a recess, and was an ill-devised a resting-place as a traveller ever courted sleep upon. Such was Pierce's bedroom, and whatever his doubts of security might have been, he certainly anticipated very little comfort. However, he was resolved to go to bed and sleep, if possible, as he was anxious to depart early the next morning. Instantly fastening the door, which, to his surprise, he found so amply provided with locks, bolts, and bars, that he laughed at the woman's solemn charge, he flung himself carelessly on the bed in his clothes.

Thus an hour passed silently and sleeplessly away. Pierce was not conscious of any sound but the low, mournful moaning of the wind, and the occasional flap of a night bird against the window.

The monotonous ticking of a clock fell upon his ear and lulled him into some dim notion of home and security. Slowly the curtains became indistinct and vapoury, and the whole room gradually became darker and darker as he sank into an imperfect sleep.

Aware of all that he had seen and heard, yet yielding, not so much of his own free will as to exhaustion, he might have been lying an hour, perhaps two, in this uninterrupted repose, when he fancied that a light flashed across his eyes, and he suddenly started up in bed.

Pierce had often read of phantoms, and trap doors, secret springs, lanterns, and white sheets, and for the moment he really expected nothing less than a realisation of those horrors, when he saw one of the recesses move out of its place, as a sliding panel would in a romance, and the mysterious woman, with a hood and handkerchief on her head, and a candle in her hand, glided as lightly as a spectre to his bedside. Pierce's heart beat tumultuously; a moment's reflection passed through his mind; then he said:

"In Heaven's name, my good woman, what's the matter?"

"Death, desolation, black guilt, is abroad to-night!" she said, with startling impressiveness; "and woe to you and yours if you do not instantly follow me!"

"You seem to take a singular interest in my affairs," returned Pierce, half incredulously; "but unless you promise to inform me of the real cause of all this mystery, I will not stir a single step!"

"I make no promise," she replied, haughtily. "I must not be bound, for men's lives are in my hands, and if a woman's weakness stifles her justice, she will be pitied, not condemned. I will not promise to tell you anything. If you would be safe, rise and follow me; if you would die, your fate be upon you!"

"Give me some information as to your object," returned Pierce, not wholly convinced, and what kind of knowledge you so very

mysteriously conceal, and I will thankfully adopt your advice."

"When we are beyond the hearing of these walls," she exclaimed, in a solemn whisper, "I will place my knowledge in your power."

The young traveller only awaited a reasonable excuse to confide in her, and followed her on the instant down a flight of broken steps at the back of the room. When they reached the bottom a gust of wind extinguished the light and left them in total darkness.

They were now on the high road; never did the young man forget the sensations he experienced at that moment. They had scarcely got clear of the house when a gunshot rang through his brain; it was rapidly followed by another and another, until shot after shot was poured into the room in which he had slept; he could tell that by the direction, and the sudden illumination of the window.

Involuntarily he grasped the arm of his companion, and, as well as his excitement would permit, uttered his imperfect gratitude, but she signed him to be silent, and conducted him with extreme caution through the valley, always avoiding the open path and walking in the shadow.

As they reached the extremity, Pierce turned to look back upon the "Three Black Doves." It was a huge mass of shadow rising amidst a confused flickering of lights through the narrow windows, and an intermittent noise like the sound of many voices. The woman fervently blessed herself, making the sign of the cross upon her forehead, and instinctively bending the knee as she offered that mark of acknowledgment.

At the end of an hour, during which they spoke but little, and that without much confidence, they reached a village. It is unnecessary now to detail the circumstances which induced Judith to put our hero in possession of facts that afterwards became public; it is only necessary to state here that at her own request Pierce took her to a magistrate of the county, to whom she revealed a series of occurrences related in the following chapters. She was the means of avenging wrongs that power had long concealed, and Pierce Renfew became, through the accident of his visit to the "Three Black Doves," the agent of a just and retributive providence.

CHAPTER II.

A SON OF SATAN.

THE family of the Nortons possessed considerable property in the county of N—. The common people, whose impressions are generally produced by strong excitement, entertained towards that family, a feeling of intense dislike amounting to abhorrence.

It was said that old Norton had made his large fortune by cruel and rapacious exactions. He had gone through all the gradations of popular odium; he had purchased the tithes from the rector, and harassed the tenantry; he had enforced extortionate fines, and driven out the poor and unfortunate on quarterday; in fact, the country in the immediate vicinity of his district was furnished and depopulated, or peopled only by wretched and starving paupers, who derived no protection or employment from the lord of the soil.

Amid the oaths and bonfires of hundreds of the peasantry, he expired. His race was extinct save an only son, who inherited with the lineaments all the vices of his father. Gerald Norton was at that period twenty years of age, and not wanting in good looks.

He seemed not to require the experience of guilt or the auxiliaries of time and stratagem for the perpetration of those heartless excesses that mark the class to which he belonged. He rushed into the chaos of iniquity at once, and scouted alike the appeals of justice and religion with a most determined callousness.

Among the many who had fallen victims to his unbridled depravity was Kuthleen Mayo. Her father was driven by beggary to the un-

lawful practices of a peacher. A season of unexampled distress deprived him of the only source from which he could obtain the means of paying his rent; and he and his child, a handsome girl of eighteen, were driven out into the cold, and hunted off the estate.

In his desperation he violated the laws of his country, and took by force what he could not wring from the mercy of his landlord. He was seized in the act of poaching on Norton's estate and was dragged before the young judge, his late persecutor.

"Well, sir," exclaimed Norton, "you have brought yourself under the law at last. You will be transported for this act."

Mayo ground his teeth, but said nothing.

"The means of escape are within your reach, however," continued his enemy. "This in my power to give you up or to save you."

"Sure, then, Mister Gerald, do what you niver did before," sued Mayo, "and send me back with Heaven's blessing in my mouth for you."

"One moment—where is your daughter?" returned Norton.

"Kathleen—Kathleen! Then where is she you may well ask. Could I see her starve under my eyes? Starve, ay, and die like a dog, without trying with my own life to save her? Ah, sure, she will soon be fatherless."

"Not if you are wise, Mayo," said the scheming Norton. "Undertake to send her to me in an hour, I will hear her plead your cause, and believe me Kathleen can do it far more effectively than you."

"You will listen to her?" said the anxious father.

"I have said so," returned Norton, superciliously.

Mayo could scarcely believe what he heard, and, bewildered at the prospect of escape, was too much overjoyed to suspect the nature of the agency by which his freedom was to be accomplished.

Kathleen was at Norton Grange within the hour, her hands were raised to the deliverer of her father, her beautiful eyes streaming with tears of gratitude, and a broken prayer hovered upon her sweet ripe lips; but her appearance had no other effect upon Gerald Norton than to suggest a deeper plan for the furtherance of his base design.

"My dear girl," he exclaimed, in a tone of affected sympathy, "do not distress me with your thanks. Your tears will spoil those lovely eyes; rest content that your father is forgiven. A comfortable situation is just now vacant in my establishment, it is yours. Go, my sweet girl, I cannot bear a reply."

Kathleen returned to her father, who, accepting with gratitude this unexpected boon, almost flattered himself with hopes of future prosperity and happiness.

"You were not marked for sorrow, my child," he cried, "and now I swear never to break the laws again, since my poor Kathleen will not want either bread or blessing."

The sequel to Kathleen's story is common place and, unfortunately, of every-day occurrence, but it is none the less affecting on that account. She became an inmate at Norton Grange, and discovered, when too late, Gerald Norton's evil purpose. She had no power to retreat—because she was already sacrificed; and she was afraid to reveal her sorrow and suffering to her father.

Months of anguish and increasing apprehension passed away, yet she endured her bitter portion with more than feminine patience. A vague hope of redress in the future always presented itself to her mind, and that clinging attachment which a woman feels to the object of her first affections would not yet permit her to denounce her wronger, but the trouble which she had for months laboured to conceal from her father soon reached him through another channel: a domestic at the Grange, who had reason to suspect the truth, informed Mayo of the particulars, exaggerated perhaps by a petulant sense of personal injustice.

It was a stormy and starless night when the evil tidings reached the old man. The way to

Norton Grange lay through a rugged passage of rock and heath; and poverty and depression had wrung the elasticity of nerve and limb. He was not well fitted to journey alone on such a night, but he rushed forth without a guide, almost without reason. His long white hair hung wildly over his shoulders; his lips quivered in an agony, and, whatever was his intent, he looked more like madness than revenge.

It was late when he reached the mansion, and, after some parley, he obtained admittance. Gerald Norton had little expectation of such a visitor, and was already on the point of retiring to his apartment when Mayo entered the room.

"Villain!" exclaimed the infuriated parent. "Is what I hear true?"

"Villain," reiterated Norton, his eyes flashing angrily, "what do you mean, you low-bred ruffian?"

"Ay—ay, villain to your heart's core," groaned the old man, and every muscle of his frame quivered. "Villain and coward too! Where's my daughter—my child? What have you done with her, fiend?"

"If you do not instantly quit this apartment," cried Norton, passionately, "I will have you taken into custody. Do you suppose I will stand here to be threatened by a scoundrel like you?"

"I suppose you'll swear that I tried to kill you and have me hanged for murder, but I am not worth a barrel of iron or a pinch of gunpowder. If I was, Gerald Norton, I might kill you—for you have broken my heart. I might curse you."

"Stand out of my way, madman!" exclaimed Norton, with pale and quivering lip, "or I will alarm the house."

"No, I'll neither burn your house nor your stacks, nor maim your cattle—nothing of yours will I touch, but I swear that as sure as there's a Heaven to judge between us, that if you do not give me back my poor Kathleen one of us will die for your crime."

"What should I know of your daughter?" said the well-bred ruffian, in evident embarrassment.

"Another moment, Norton," cried Mayo, and he glared wildly upon him, "another moment I give you! If I am to die of disgrace and shame and sorrow, mark me, I'll be buried in the cross roads for your sake."

"Really, my good fellow," stammered out Norton, who had now become seriously alarmed, "I shall endeavour to discover where your daughter is, but you mistake, I—I—"

"Look at your white lips, and the miserable, wretched lie upon them. Coward! what do you shake for? Are you afraid of an old man of three score?"

Mayo had by this time approached closer to Norton, who was endeavouring to get near the door, and, intercepting him, looked full in his face.

"If you take a million of false oaths against me I'll have revenge."

He gazed at him for a second as if collecting and concentrating his energies; then, with a spring like a tiger, he flung himself upon his daughter's wronger and bore him to the ground. Norton shrieked from excess of pain and fright, and, in a convulsive and terrible voice, cried:

"Help! Murder!"

Still Mayo pressed his hands upon his throat, stifling his heavy efforts at respiration, Norton had scarcely a minute to live. His face became swollen and black, his hands writhed and twisted, and his whole body coiled beneath the gigantic pressure of the herculean peasant.

At this juncture the servants, alarmed by their master's cry of murder, rushed into the room. Mayo, who was too much engrossed with the object of retribution, and who had by this time nearly strangled his victim, neither stirred nor turned at their entrance—but, applying his face closer to the wretched Norton, tried to see if he could discover any signs of life.

With difficulty they dragged him from the body of their master, his vacant looks still fastened on it, and his hands still stretched out

and clenched. He was insensible; the act was done or he was still doing it in his imagination, and when he awoke from the delirium he found his victim removed, the room dark and closed up.

His hands were fettered behind his back, and chains, which one man's strength would not have sufficed to lift, fastened upon his legs. His dark fate was now before him; he had anticipated death, and was prepared to meet it.

When Gerald Norton recovered his first step was to secure under warrant of a magistrate the person of Mayo. He stated in his information that the unhappy man had demanded money, and was in the act of rifling his desk when, upon his interference, the attempt at murder followed, which was verified by the sworn attestations of the servants. The crime of robbery was united by this device to the imputed design of murder, and all hope of pardon or commutation was excluded.

The day of trial arrived; the court was crowded by the peasantry, who to a solitary individual were satisfied of Mayo's innocence, and sympathized with him in proportion to the hatred they bore his accuser. The counts in the indictment were read, evidence was produced to sustain them, and spoken to by the counsel; when the judge inquired what Mayo had to urge in his defence Mayo shrugged his shoulders and remained silent.

"Have you no witnesses to produce as to character?" asked the judge.

"Plenty, plenty, please your reverence," echoed a hundred voices at once, from every part of the court-house.

The usher called "Silence!" and the judge proceeded.

"Mayo, you had better reconsider; to attempt a man's life without provocation, although the law recognises no palliations in such a case, renders your situation utterly hopeless."

"My lord! my lord!" exclaimed Mayo, "what's the use of talking? Sure I know I'll be hanged, and I told him so. I've only one witness in the world on my side, but she doesn't know a word about this business. If he swears before your honour that he never did harm to my child I'll forgive him, as I am going into the presence of the Great Judge."

The indignation of the assembly seemed to boil up at this last expression, and it was only by the assistance of the police that the tumult was stilled. A messenger was finally despatched for Kathleen, at the instance of Mr. Renfew, who was one of the jurors; and his lordship consented to postpone judgment until the following morning, in the expectation that new testimony might be elicited from her. But the errand was vain.

Kathleen was not to be found, although great diligence was used by the people in the neighbourhood, who felt a deep anxiety in poor Mayo's circumstances. This, together with their aversion to Norton, increased their suspicions of foul play; and it was even believed that she had been made away with in order to suppress her evidence.

The next morning came; Mayo was condemned to death. His execution was to take place in three days. But on the night preceding his execution he was found dead in his cell. It was supposed he had died of a broken heart.

The effect produced upon the people by this intelligence was universal and terrific. Norton was pursued with execrations. Wherever he appeared his life was in peril from the fury of the mob. He was publicly accused of the murder of Kathleen Mayo, and vengeance for the blood of her father was called down upon him. His servants were warned to leave his employment on penalty of death; his crops remained without reapers and gatherers; his ground was untilled; and desolation and distraction rested upon his household.

In the course of a little time the fever of the popular mind increased to an alarming degree. Kathleen was never heard of, rivers, ponds, and canals were dragged, and the woods vigilantly searched, but without the discovery of any clue to her mysterious fate.

The irritation of disappointment was exas-

perated by the increasing tyranny of Norton, who became more imperious and coercive as his loneliness increased. His house had been fired twice, and shots were heard frequently about his lawn; when fear and prudence prompted him at last to adopt decisive measures for his protection. He placed an agent over his estate and left the country, announcing his intention of remaining on the Continent for some years.

CHAPTER III.

RETRIBUTION.

NORTON GRANGE rapidly fell into decay, and with the dilapidation of that ancient residence the name of Norton was slowly sinking into oblivion. His race was almost forgotten, and fifteen years had elapsed since Mayo's death. New scenes, new sensations, and sympathies had obliterated at last the associations of past times, and many of those who had reason to hate Gerald Norton had been swept away in the disasters of insurrection, or forced, in self-preservation, to emigrate from the country.

A social reunion had taken place among the residents of the immediate neighbourhood, and the peasantry became once more tranquil, if not prosperous. At this crisis Norton returned. His character was little changed. He still retained that spirit of intolerance which, if he had possessed power, would have made him a despot, and without it a bigot; but it was refined by ductility and externally softened by that artful adaptiveness to habits and opinions which he had acquired during a long residence in foreign cities.

He was no longer boisterous and implacable; hypocrisy tempered crime, and threw a transitory veil over enormous iniquities. He returned with the character of reformation, and sought confidence under that disguise. The old mansion was speedily restored to its former appearance.

The peasantry obtained temporary employment while the work of regeneration was going forward, and those who recollected the story of Kathleen Mayo began to acquit Norton of any evil share in it; but the gentry, impatient to impute disgrace where they suspected, and sensitively alive to character, declined to associate with him.

He was not only treated with indifference, but pointedly shunned at an assize-ball which he attended for the purpose of cultivating acquaintance, and he found at the age of thirty-five that he had not yet learned how to conciliate human affections.

His property in the county had, nevertheless, sufficient weight to obtain him a commission of the peace, and invested with magisterial powers, he coolly meditated the means of revenge. He would neither receive information from nor protect the property of the persons who were obnoxious to him, and he carried his animosities with so high a hand that his conduct was discussed without reserve.

He had made advances to Mr. Renfrew's niece, the beautiful Norah Cavanagh, of whom he became passionately enamoured—more so, on learning that she, on attaining her majority, would inherit vast riches. But the fair girl repelled all his advances, for two potent reasons. In the first place, because she had a decided aversion to the wickedly handsome Gerald Norton, and in the next because she loved her cousin Pierce, and had promised to become his wife. This was another indignity which the unscrupulous Gerald determined not to let pass unavenged.

It was late on a severe winter night that the figure of a man, closely muffled, might have been seen crossing an unfrequented part of the Norton estate. Few would have ventured out on so dismal a night, but the stranger fearlessly braved its terrors, and rapidly pursued his track into a furze field.

He gained, with some difficulty, the summit of the hill that crowned it, and precipitately

descended into an abrupt defile. When he had traversed some extent of this dark and dangerous ravine he stopped at the door of a lone and miserable hovel that stood on a scanty spot of stunted verdure.

Having carefully reconnoitred the place, he gave a low knock at the door, which was almost instantly opened. A woman stood behind the door, and a man advanced to meet the visitor. They were the only inmates of this squalid hut. After mutual recognition the muffled stranger sat on a low stool near the window and the man stood opposite to him.

A dim light burned in a lamp on a small table and shrouded the interior of the hut with a melancholy gloom. A short pause ensued, which was finally broken by the visitor. Leaving his seat he approached M'Carty, and taking him on one side, inquired in a whisper, if he were ready to start. M'Carty replied in the affirmative.

"Then we must depart at once. Renfrew is expected home to-night, accompanied only by his man. He must die," he added, in a low, passionate tone, "and I will not confide my plans to a third person. See, I am prepared," and opening his voluminous coat he displayed a gleaming revolver.

M'Carty, who seemed to enter into the plan at once, made a sign of acquiescence and proceeded to examine the state of his own weapons. He then desired Judith to put out the light as soon as they were gone, adding that he would shortly return.

The stranger, on leaving the hovel, threw the woman a piece of gold, but she shrank back from it as though a scorpion had suddenly sprung in her path, and hurried from the room. They proceeded at a rapid pace until they reached the boundary of the valley. At the head of it the stranger paused.

"Hist, M'Carthy, did you not hear the sound of horses' feet?"

"No," rejoined his companion, "no. Is it likely you did? Do you think he'd ride home in such a storm as this?"

"Yes, I know he will, for I despatched a letter after him, forged in the name of his niece, the girl whom I so passionately love, and whose hand the old dotard so insolently refused me. The letter was to the effect that his wife was taken suddenly ill, and requiring him to return immediately, and by my reckoning he should be near at hand by this time."

They reached a bank that was fenced by a hedge, beyond which the high road lay some feet below them. After a sullen examination of the spot M'Carty, flinging himself upon the earth, impatiently inquired:

"May I make so bold as to ask, sir, now that old Renfrew is so near his fate, what he has done to deserve it? To be sure it's no great affair of mine, because he swore away my brother's life in a riot, and I have sought him day and night. There seems a charm over his life, but what is his crime against you?"

"It is graven on my heart in characters of flame," rejoined the other, "it has been there for years. Time has not yet quenched that raging fire. It consumes me, and nothing but his life's blood can extinguish it. Listen to me patiently, and you shall learn all. Hark!" he ejaculated, suddenly, "was that a footstep near us?"

M'Carty started to his feet, and raised the trigger of his weapon. The stranger leaned eagerly across the hedge, but the shrill whistling of the wind was the only sound that reached them. After listening for a few moments they resumed their places, and the stranger said:

"Do you recollect Mayo's trial?"

"Augh," muttered his companion, with a shudder of disgust. "Don't name it. The sight of the poor old man when I last saw him haunted me for many a long day, and I fancy I can see him at this moment."

"On that occasion," continued the other, apparently heedless of the commentary, "old Renfrew was concerned in the trial. He sat upon me and my name. He was the judge between me and my character. Curse him, can I forget that?"

"Never mind that, but tell me what he did," exclaimed M'Carty, impatiently.

"He was a juror," resumed the stranger, and when the verdict was agreed upon by his fellows, he insisted that Kathleen Mayo should be sent for, and the odium and disgrace that followed fell upon me."

"Norton! Norton!" cried M'Carty, in an ungovernable burst of indignation, "you are worse than a fiend. Can you name that name and not tremble? Can you lift your eyes to the red lightnings and not fear that they will lodge in your black heart for all you did and are doing, and have you not enough yet?"

"Never till Renfrew pays the penalty of his offence. Besides, has not his accursed son robbed me of the only woman I ever loved? No, on him and his race shall the blight fall heavily. They shall mourn it abroad and at home, and to the last of their days the fear shall be upon them!"

The distant sound of a voice, resembling a shout, caught Norton's ear, and drawing his weapon from his belt, and motioning M'Carty to do the same, he lay upon the bank under shelter of the hedge that divided them from the road. The sound approached and then again faded into distance. The night was cold and dark, and the rain fell thickly.

"It was a voice," whispered M'Carty.

"Hush!" cried Norton.

Again the shout was heard, and presently two voices seemed almost immediately to mingle and sink into a lower tone. In another moment the distant tread of horses' feet was heard, and the clatter of their hoofs was rendered more distinct by the sheets of water that covered the road.

The sound became more and more clear and rapid as it approached, until at last its quickness and vibration gave confident assurance to Norton and his companion that Renfrew and his servant were within pistol shot. The horses were now palpably below them; and the heads of the riders in a straight line with the spot where they lay; they could not be mistaken.

"Now!" hissed Gerald Norton, excitedly. "Fire!"

M'Carty raised his weapon and took steady aim, hesitated a moment, then lowering the pistol suddenly said:

"No, I cannot—I ain't got the heart to slay a defenceless man."

"Coward," muttered Norton, between his set teeth, striking him a savage blow, as, thrusting him aside, he discharged his revolver. The near figure sprang high out of his saddle and, with a cry of agony, fell from his horse.

It was John Renfrew; in an instant he was dead. The assassin eagerly watched the result, and when he saw that Renfrew was no more he, in company with M'Carty, rushed across the field and escaped.

The mysterious death of old Mr. Renfrew excited an unusual alarm in the country. The unfortunate deceased having preserved a strict neutrality on all questions of conflicting politics during a long intercourse with the neighbourhood, he had obtained the respect and confidence of all parties. A person who had so justly earned attachment could not be suffered to pass away without some public token of regret and some general exertion made towards the discovery of the assassin.

A meeting of the magistrates and gentlemen of the county was accordingly convened to assist in procuring evidence at the inquest. It was supposed that M'Carty had perpetrated the deed, as his enmity to Renfrew was universally known.

M'Carty's associates were men who followed pursuits of the same dark character, and their haunts were in the mountains. Had they, however, been concerned in the murder the temptation of reward and pardon that was held out might have induced an accomplice to give information to the authorities.

M'Carty's cottage was searched. His wife, the woman Judith, had fled, for the wretched hut was wholly uninhabited. The inquest pro-

ceeded, therefore, without proof presumptive or direct. Gerald Norton was among the magistrates on the occasion, and by an overwrought zeal endeavoured to blind all suspicion of the share which he had taken in the outrage.

The first witness who was called was a blacksmith who lived in the field adjoining to that where Mr. Renfrew's body lay. He deposed to having found on the morning after the murder a piece of torn paper on his ground near a track of fresh-ploughed earth, that bore the marks of having been trodden by some person during the night.

A juror asked if he had the paper, the witness replied in the affirmative, and produced it as he was desired. The wily Norton watched his hand and eagerly snatching it exclaimed:

"Before this paper is read I have an important question to ask the witness. Can you swear that you were the first person who went out upon your grounds that morning?"

The man hesitated.

"That is important," observed a magistrate; "endeavour to recollect whether any member of your family had occasion to cross the field at an early hour."

In the meantime Gerald Norton took an opportunity of hastily examining the paper. His lips became livid, and his face ghastly pale. It was part of a letter addressed to himself, which he had incautiously used as wadding for his pistol. He hastily tore away the direction, and commanded sufficient presence of mind to conceal it without observation.

Secure of safety, he boldly resumed his seat, and again put the same question. The confused witness at length said that he believed his son had been out before him that morning. Norton then, in secret exultation, handed the blank paper to the jury, who, unable to glean anything from it, concluded the examination, finding a verdict to the effect that the deceased was shot wilfully by some persons or persons unknown, but that circumstances induced a belief that M'Carty was the assassin.

This narrow escape, instead of redeeming Norton from the thralldom of his evil passions, gave him increased confidence in crime. A lucky accident had always hitherto preserved him from the terrible retribution of the laws. At one period the disappearance of Kathleen Mayo, at another the absence of proof and the suppression of the paper produced at the inquest. Yet he was still base and mad enough to pursue his revenge, by attempting the life of his hated rival, Pierce Renfrew.

By affording legal protection to men who had violated the peace and by extravagant bribery he found means to win over to his interests and purposes a few disaffected individuals who held small leases upon his estates. Six months had passed away since the death of Mr. Renfrew, and Pierce had been recalled from Oxford, as we before observed, at the commencement of our story, at the express wish of his sorrowing mother, and—need we say?—he was anxiously looked for by his devoted cousin, Norah Cavanagh.

Norton, in some mysterious way, had become acquainted with the news of Pierce's return, and his emissaries were scattered through the valleys and on the hills, and but for young Renfrew missing his way he must assuredly have fallen into the hands of his enemies among the mountains.

Aware of these circumstances, the strange woman at "The Three Black Doves," warned him of the risk he ran in remaining at the inn that night, for she knew that as the gang had missed him on the hills they would search for him at "The Three Black Doves," whither he had been tracked.

The reader will remember how Norton's satellites surrounded the house and fired into the room at the moment of Pierce's escape.

On inquiring whether Ryan Flemming was a participator in these dreadful scenes Judith answered in the negative.

"But," she exclaimed, her eyes lighting wildly, "justice must at last be satisfied. The master of these assassins, who came to take your life, cannot for ever baffle the agents of

vengeance. I have often tried and always failed in my strength to bring Gerald Norton to justice. I have the proofs that can hang him where his first victim Michael Mayo was to have perished, and, as there is a Heaven above, if my strength holds out, I will do it. Take me to a magistrate. I have saved your life, and you shall preserve me from breaking the peace of my grave."

With a feeling of gratitude, not unmixed with awe, Pierce conducted her to the house of a magistrate, to whom she related the tragic events which when collected by our hero constituted the ground-work of this veritable history. That same night a sergeant of police, attended by a strong escort, rode to Norton Grange, and, inquiring for its master, was shown into his study.

"I arrest you, Gerald Norton, in the Queen's name!" said the officer.

The shock communicated by these words was powerful and unmistakable. Norton could scarcely question him respecting his authority, and in a tremulous voice desired to see the warrant. It was instantly shown him, and on perusing it he clasped his hands convulsively, and, as if struck by electricity, fell prone upon the floor.

The curiosity of the people to see a magistrate of the county in the felon's dock, and that magistrate Gerald Norton, filled all the avenues to the court-house with crowds of spectators, and it was with difficulty that the judges could obtain ingress. Multitudes thronged from all quarters—the gentry attracted by rumours of Norton's crimes, and the peasantry by the recollections of the events of fifteen years' standing.

The criminal was taken in a close carriage from the gaol to the court, and the shouts of the infuriated mob as he passed along seemed a prophecy of the doom that awaited him, and Norton felt how justly he had earned the bitter cup which he could not now put away.

When he was placed in the dock he in vain endeavoured to appear calm and unaffected, but the transitions of colour, and the restlessness of his manner, were indications that could not be mistaken.

During the reading of the indictment he appeared deeply abstracted, but when the first witness for the prosecution was called, however, he turned suddenly round, threw his arms over the railing of the dock and endeavoured to look her steadily in the face. It was the woman Judith, but she never once turned towards him. The counsel rose and proceeded with the examination.

"Pray, my good woman," said he, "what is your name?"

A painful pause followed, during which the witness seemed to be struggling with her emotions. At length she broke the silence and said:

"Kathleen Mayo."

The assembly expressed their amazement by a confused exclamation, and when order was restored the examination was resumed. It appeared from Kathleen's testimony that when her father was arraigned for the alleged robbery and attempted murder Norton had her conveyed to a far-distant part of the country under the care of a man in whom he reposed implicit confidence. That man was M'Carty. Norton would not consent to Kathleen's return till by force she had become the wife of the wretch to whose custody he had consigned her.

On his return from travel he again sought out M'Carty, conceiving that time had obliterated all recollections and swept away the kindred of Kathleen. He brought them both back to the neighbourhood of Norton Grange, imposing, however, upon the deeply-injured girl the obligation of assuming the name of Judith, lest even her name might awaken doubts and produce investigations.

The sequel is briefly told. On the night of Mr. Renfrew's murder Kathleen fled, not, however, with her husband, who was never heard of after; she fled partly for safety and partly because she did not wish, even disgusted as she

was with Norton's villainies, to take away his life by remaining to give evidence against him. After the lapse of a few months she returned, disguised by art as well as age; and affecting the mysterious knowledge of a fortune-teller, she frequently took up her abode during her wanderings at "The Three Black Doves," where she ever received a kindly welcome from the hands of worthy Ryan Flemming.

Her principal object was to watch over the life of Pierce Renfrew, and to detect and frustrate the machinations of his arch enemy Gerald Norton. At last the circumstances occurred which introduced our hero to Kathleen Mayo. The opportunity seemed favourable to confession; she resolved upon atonement, and made it amply.

When her evidence was fully heard, and the charge of murder clearly established against Norton he was called upon for his defence. He affected to rest his innocence upon the rank and station which he held in society; these, he asserted, were sufficient pledges that the charges against him were malicious and false, and Kathleen's testimony he attributed to the disappointed ambition and insatiable revenge of a discarded woman.

The accused was heard patiently to the end, and the jury were desired to consider their verdict. Without retiring from the box, the foreman handed the judge a verdict of "Guilty." A loud buzz ran through the eager spectators, and, communicating to the masses without the walls, terminated in a deafening cheer of satisfaction. Never was popular feeling so unequivocally expressed. The judge prudently checked it, however, in order to give to the last office of the violated law the solemnity which it demanded.

He pronounced sentence of death on Norton, whose sense of conception was dim and confused long before the awful words were uttered. He expiated his crimes in front of the gaol where the unhappy Mayo died of a broken heart. The incensed populace assembled in vast crowds, and the hills as far as the eye could reach were covered with dense multitudes, whose shouts of derision rang upon the ears of the wretched criminal as he was launched into eternity.

On a bright May morn Pierce Renfrew, now no longer the victim of secret persecution, led a lovely blushing bride to the hymeneal altar. Need we add it was the constant and devoted Norah Cavanagh? F. F.

H A T S .

THE hat makes the man, says Berthelier, a popular French humourist. A man without a hat, or a hat without a man, is an unfinished pillar—a lid without a jar. When you see a man running in the street without a hat, Berthelier continues, you take him for a lunatic or a thief; and if you find a hat by itself on the banks of a river, or on the corner of a drawing-room table, you instantly guess at a suicide, or that a man is hiding somewhere. Man and his hat are two elements that—apart—represent folly and chaos, and together make up an individual. Show me your hat, cries Berthelier, and I can tell you who and what you are.

He describes the hats of the Spanish priest, which leaves the ears free so that the priest may hear everything, but which throws the face into deep shade; the hat of the dashing *mosquetaire* raised boldly and bravely from the face, and making no attempt at hiding; the famous cocked hat of Napoleon; the French *képi*, &c., and in the course of his descriptions he makes some admirable observations. Men always retain, he says, the habit of a style of hat they have worn for long when young. Some men wear their hat on one side to their last day; others tilt it forward; louts ram their hats down over their eyes, while the men of genius are often compelled, he says, to wear their hats somewhat on

the back of their heads, because of the bumps representing all the noble qualities that rise up on the forehead and prevent the hat being pushed on.

The man of intelligence is forced by his bumps to wear his hat on the back of his head; the man whose intelligence is overpowered by his animal qualities is forced to wear it forward. If a man's character can be guessed at by the appearance of his hat, how much more is it true of a woman. A youthful hat upon the head of a middle-aged woman makes her appear frivolous, while a sedate bonnet placed upon the head of a young girl ages her, apparently, many years. A very large bonnet or hat gives an air of boldness to the wearer, a very small one insignificance. The head-covering, therefore, should be chosen with great care.

THE INVENTION OF GLASS.

THE art of glass-making has not been, like those of pottery and of metallurgy, a possession of nearly all tribes of the human race in the earliest infancy of their civilisation. It does not appear to have been known to the Mexicans or Peruvians, although both had made very considerable advances in civilisation and art. Even the Chinese did not possess it at any very early time, for about 200 years B.C. would seem to be the most remote date at which that nation even claims to have practised it; glass is not mentioned by Homer, nor do any fragments appear to have been found by Dr. Schliemann upon the supposed site of Ilium.

He has, however, stated that he found in the ruins of Mycenæ some disks of glass which he believes to have been ornaments of doors, and a bead of the same material. It is perhaps hardly too bold an assertion that the knowledge of the art throughout the world springs from one source, namely Egypt; certainly the most ancient monuments of glass are Egyptian. We may trace channels of communication by which the art of making it may have been transmitted from Egypt to every part of the globe, where it is now or has been practised.

One consequence of this is that objects, though produced in other countries, closely resemble one another—e.g., Egyptian and Phœnician in the earlier ages, and in the later Egyptian and Roman, nor in many cases can any difference be found between glass made at Rome itself and in the provinces of the empire. So in later times workmen from Venice imitated the products of Murano, in Spain, the Low Countries, France, and England. It is therefore very often impossible to ascribe objects to their place of manufacture with the confidence which can be felt in the case of arts more autochthonous than that of glass—e.g., the ceramic.

HIS REVENGE.

IT was a balmy spring evening; clear, warm, with an amber light falling through the aisles of the trees that stood like sentinels along the winding avenue that led to the stately residence of Allan Carlisle, the banker.

The stars were coming out one by one in the clear, violet sky that was still yellow in the west with the beams of the setting sun; the dews of evening were gently falling on the foliage.

The residence fitly corresponded to the surroundings; broad, luxuriant parterres of flowers encircled the house, while the rooms beyond were adorned with all the splendour which wealth could furnish.

In one of these rooms sat a beautiful young girl, whose thoughts were in strange discord to the enchanting scene without. She sat gazing mechanically out on the clear evening with a weary, yet almost defiant, look upon her face. This was the eve before her wedding.

Lucille Moore had been left an orphan at an early age, and her mother's sister, fascinated by her delicate beauty, thought she would be a fitting ornament for her beautiful home, and adopted her.

She had given her niece as much love as was possible for one possessing her cold, worldly nature. Proud and aristocratic, Helen Carlisle looked upon wealth and station as the only things worth attaining.

But over the influential banking house of Carlisle & Co. hung the cloud of ruin, which would surely have descended had not pecuniary assistance been afforded. The gifted and wealthy lawyer, Raymond Harcourt, had come to the rescue, at the same time asking but the hand of Lucille in return.

Strange as it may seem, it was not love that prompted this request, he having only met Lucille a few times during the previous season, but pique.

He had been deeply charmed with May Chester, and the fashionable world looked forward to the announcement of their engagement; but another and wealthier suitor appeared upon the field, a millionaire fast verging on three-score years and ten, and May immediately and promptly accepted him.

This rude awakening from his love fancy had no outward effect upon Raymond except to render him a trifle more cynical. He thought to be revenged on May, whose wedding was to take place in the early autumn. The financial embarrassment of Allan Carlisle furnished him the means of so doing, which he seized with avidity.

He afforded the desired relief, and was the accepted suitor of Lucille. He had secured a beautiful, highly accomplished girl for his wife; he knew she could perform the duties that devolved upon her as mistress of his elegant mansion with the most perfect ease; he would have his revenge, and be satisfied.

It was this knowledge that caused the bitter expression in Lucille's sweet eyes; naturally of a high-spirited, though sweet, temperament, she rebelled, heart and soul, against this heartless disposition of her life.

She had met Ray Harcourt in society, knew him to be a handsome, gifted, elegant, polished man, a power in his profession, and much sought after in society; but when his motive in marrying her crossed her mind her cheeks burned with shame, and she compressed her lips tightly together.

The door swung on its hinges softly, and a lady, elegantly attired, stepped over to where Lucille was sitting, and laid her hand lightly on her shoulder.

"Lucille, my dear, why are you sitting here so listlessly? Is it not the eve before your wedding? Do try to rouse yourself to take some interest in the fact."

The girl turned slowly, and drew herself up to her full height, while her eyes blazed with pent-up feeling, and her low voice was filled with passionate pain.

"Aunt, as you well know, mine is a marriage of convenience; it has been no question of love between Mr. Harcourt and myself; he will have his petty revenge, and the great banking house of Carlisle will be saved. I have been bought with a price; do not reproach me for taking no interest in the sale."

Mrs. Carlisle laid her lips lightly on Lucille's brow, and replied:

"I trust, Lucille, that in time you will view things differently; for the present you need rest, and sleep, to prepare you for the event of tomorrow."

So saying, she softly left the room; no thought of the sacrifice of Lucille entered the cold serenity of her heart. Sacrifice! Was she not the most fortunate of girls? That her niece did not appreciate her good fortune was a mistake that time would rectify, she reflected. She had ever thought Lucille pliable, and easily awayed; but when she uttered a passionate remonstrance at being thus bargained for, Mrs. Carlisle shrugged her shoulders in incredulous astonishment, and reminded her of her duty to the one who had filled a parent's place.

She pictured to Lucille the beautiful ancestral home of the Carlises under the hammer; and Lucille, too proud and sensitive to be called ungrateful, submitted. She sat where her aunt had left her, looking on the scene without, where the crescent moon was rising in her loneliness, bathing the tall poplars with a soft beauty. Then she arose, and, without a glance at the rich wedding garments that lay about the chamber, threw herself on the rose-curtailed bed, where she fell into a troubled sleep.

The sun of another day had set, sinking downward, beyond purple bars of clouds, slowly toward the west, without rest, yet without haste, as though to give the sons of earth warning, and time to leave no bitterness unhealed ere the night had cast its pall over the deeds done, and sealed their graves never to be unclosed.

The glimmer of lights from the low windows fell through the trees, while along the winding avenue the carriages drew up, and deposited their fair burdens. Within, rare exotics filled the air with their fragrance where Raymond Harcourt awaited his bride.

The accustomed serenity was on his face, the courtly smile upon his lips, as Lucille came forward. The company gathered had never seen her look so regally beautiful as now; she was pale and pure as a lily, and would have startled them by her seeming impassibility, had not her eyes glowed like stars. The delicate lace that shaded her neck and arms was matched in softness by the skin beneath it.

Raymond Harcourt involuntarily suppressed an ejaculation of admiration. He suddenly became aware that this girl that he was wedding was superior to the object of his past foolish fancies, the splendour of the sun to the mild rays of the moon.

The words were spoken that made Ray Harcourt and Lucille Moore man and wife, and they had received the well-chosen congratulations of the assembled throng. In accordance with Lucille's express wish, they were not to go upon the accustomed wedding tour.

The carriage, with its splendid horses, its mazarine blue livery, halted before the elegant mansion that Raymond had prepared for his bride. Lucille glanced curiously at the elegance surrounding her, the servant in waiting having led her through the tapestried hall into the spacious drawing-room beyond; rare works of art denoted the cultured taste of the owner.

Her cheeks flushed, that had been so pale an hour before, as her husband entered the room; he advanced gracefully, and taking her hand, raised it to his lips.

"Permit me to welcome you to your home. I trust it will find favour in your eyes; if there are any alterations or embellishments which you may desire to make, please consider you have carte blanche."

Lucille bowed, and, lifting her eyes to his, replied, coldly:

"Thank you, Mr. Harcourt, for your kindness, but I do not think I shall find it necessary to avail myself of your generosity."

Raymond Harcourt bit his lip. He had not thought that Lucille could show so much spirit, and it somehow struck him uncomfortably how little this beautiful girl's personal feelings had been consulted in this marriage. But he showed no sign of his inward thoughts.

"As you please. But pardon me for detaining you, you must be fatigued. I will ring for your maid to show you to your rooms. And remember until you wish it otherwise, you are there secure from any intrusion of mine."

He stood where she had left him, with his arm resting lightly on the mantelpiece, and his handsome eyes wore a look of annoyance.

"By Jove! What a magnificent woman! As far above May Chester as the heavens are above earth. What a calm look of scorn lay in the depths of her beautiful eyes! Lucille"—already his lips lingered tenderly over the name—"I have done you a deeper wrong than I can ever efface, by linking your life to one you do not love."

And this admission caused him a twinge of pain that he would have laughed at but a few hours before.

Lucille sat in her dainty, violet dressing-room, with her long hair unbound, clasping her slender fingers, on one of which glittered the costly diamond which signified her wedding troth. She thought of the occurrences of the evening and sighed.

"Oh, that we could cultivate each other's society! I almost think—"

Here she abruptly checked the words rising to her lips, and rang for her maid to dress her hair for the night.

The days and weeks flew by, through the hot, sultry summer, with its soft, dreamy languor, its blazing, heated days, its still, moonlit nights, into the damp, yellow autumn. Lucille Harcourt had accepted, with a graceful ease, her position, which her attainments amply qualified her to fill.

She presided over the mansion of which she was mistress, scrupulously fulfilling every requirement—while Raymond had grown to love his beautiful wife with a passion which compared to his fancy for May Chester was the deep, earnest love of the man—not the weak, passing fancy of the school-boy.

His love burned the more fervidly by reason of its rigid suppression; for Raymond dreaded the scorn which he thought would flash in his wife's superb eyes had he shown any sign of his love; at the mere touch of her garments a delicious thrill rushed through his veins and filled his heart.

He escorted her to the balls and receptions where she reigned a belle; and Lucille never dreamed that the cold, stately man at her side loved her so passionately. She proudly repressed and tried to ignore the love toward her husband that filled her own heart, deeming it a weakness to acknowledge a passion which she thought was unreciprocated.

"We have received cards for May Chester's wedding," said Lucille to her husband, as they were on their way, one evening, to hear the delicious strains of "La Sonnambula."

"Have we?" indifferently responded her husband.

And Lucille, in the solitude of her room, thought, bitterly:

"How well he hides his feelings under the mask of indifference! Heaven help me to crush out the love that is in my heart!"

And the sweet mouth quivered as she passionately clasped her little white hands.

It was May Chester's wedding-night, and Ray Harcourt stood in the library, awaiting his wife. The door opened and Lucille advanced. Ray felt a deep thrill of pride as he gazed on her. She was dressed simply, yet elegantly, in snowy satin, with floating azure ribbons here and there and setting off the richness of her hair, gathered back in its natural waves in one soft mass. She looked so sweet and beautiful that Raymond, as he led her to the carriage in waiting, could with difficulty refrain from clasping her to his heart.

Harold Chester's residence was ablaze with light as Lucille and her husband entered the well-filled rooms. Lucille looked up into her husband's eyes with a cold smile.

"Your revenge has been sweet, Mr. Harcourt?"

A quick change passed over his face, and he unconsciously clasped his hand tightly over the soft, white one that rested lightly on his arm as he replied:

"My revenge has been bitter as death, Lucille."

Lucille looked up in surprise. "But it was time for them to offer their congratulations to the newly-wedded couple, and her husband had regained his accustomed manner."

Later in the evening, as Lucille was resting alone in the shadow of the heavy curtains of the arched window that opened into the conservatory,

the voice that had the deepest power to thrill her broke upon her ear.

"Yes, Allston," he was saying to his friend, Allston Hyde, and his voice had a ring of pain in it, "I intend going abroad; my arrangements are completed, and I sail to-morrow. I can endure the cold scorn in my wife's eyes no longer; I shall forget prudence, and declare my passion. To leave is my only safeguard—to go from the sight of her beautiful, cold face, which is daily maddening me. I love her with a love beside which my fancy for that inane piece of insipidity," looking over, as he spoke, at May Chester's childish face, "is as the heat of the sun's rays to the mild light of the moon."

"Have you not spoken of your love? Have you no hope that your wife may love you in return?"

"None. Would that I had. Her proud, sweet nature rebelled at the manner of my marriage—"

Here the speakers passed beyond Lucille's hearing. A great joy filled her whole being as she rose and wended her way to the dressing-room.

That night, as Raymond Harcourt fastened the cloak around his wife's form, he was startled by her looks; a happy, joyous light had replaced the cold indifference; her cheeks were flushed, her eyes sparkled, her whole face seemed transformed.

"Is my wife so very happy to-night?" he asked.

"So happy that the wealth of the universe could not purchase my joy!"

At this moment their carriage was announced, and prevented his replying.

Lucille had changed her evening dress for a soft, clinging robe of cashmere, trimmed with swans' down; very sweet and lovely she looked as she softly stole to the library, where her husband sat writing his farewell. At sight of him her forced composure gave way, and she passionately cried:

"Oh, Raymond, do not leave me! I cannot live without you!" And she hid her face and sobbed aloud.

Raymond Harcourt hurriedly arose, and his strong frame shook with emotion.

"Lucille, can it be that you love me? Speak, darling, and end my suspense!" And he crossed over to his wife, and wound his arm gently around her. "Tell me, my wife, do you love me?"

The delicate face sank lower and lower, till it rested on his breast, while the sweet lips tremulously answered:

"Yes, I love you, Ray."

"My own darling!" And Raymond clasped his wife closely to his heart. "Forgive me, darling, for marrying you with the motive that actuated me, Lucille," and his lips sought hers. "I did not think then that I was gaining the one treasure that is dearer than life to me."

Raymond Harcourt did not sail the next day, as he had intended; but, three months later, he and his lovely wife were outward bound for the Continent.

Let us look once more at Raymond Harcourt's home. It is evening; Lucille is seated in her boudoir, with her lovely two-year-old boy playing at her feet. She is the same Lucille of old, with perchance a fuller development of beauty.

She sits there musing, her hands clasped, her lips wearing a sweet smile. Raymond stops on the threshold to contemplate the picture, which is, to him, more beautiful than anything in the world; then he crosses softly over and imprints a kiss on Lucille's lips.

"Of what is my darling thinking?"

"Of the goodness of Heaven and its mercies," she replies, reverently, as she lifts her happy eyes to his fond, adoring ones.

Why is a Zulu belle like a prophet of old? Because she has not much on 'er in her own country.

SPONGES.

THE universal and increasing demand for sponges, and the unremitting drain to which all the best fisheries are subjected, have led to partial dearth in the supply of these useful articles; but art, which has threatened to extinguish the supply, has in this, as in many similar cases, stepped in to restore the balance.

It is only within the last few years that the real nature of the sponge has been recognized. In its natural state it is a disagreeable and almost repulsive looking object, the soft, fibrous mass with which everyone is so familiar being hidden beneath and its intricacies filled up by a slimy, gelatinous substance, which rapidly putrefies, and adds ten-fold to the unpleasant nature of the thing.

The tenacity with which these objects affix themselves to rocks and stones suggested the idea that they were a species of vegetable, though they really belong to the animal kingdom, and are allied to the anemones and zoophytes, with the appearance of many of which the public aquaria have made us acquainted.

A sponge is nothing more than an animated stomach, which, though the very lowest form of animal life, is endowed with more reason than the stomachs of mankind, inasmuch as it knows what is good and what is bad for it, and rejects the latter while imbibing only the former. The gelatinous substance, which forms the actual body of the sponge, being beaten and washed out of it, the fibrous skeleton is left in the state in which it is sold in the shops.

The search for these creatures employs an army of skilled divers, the principal "sponging" being in the Greek archipelago and in other parts of the Mediterranean, in the Red Sea, in the Bahamas and other parts of the West Indies, and in some of the islands of the Pacific.

The Colonies and the Indies give publicity to a fact which is likely to diminish the dangers attending the operations of "sponging," and at the same time to increase the available supply of sponges. It appears that two German naturalists have made the discovery that two small pieces, carefully cut from live sponges, and attached to boards or stones, and sunk in suitable localities, will grow in a few months into sponges, as though nothing had happened. This fact is of the utmost importance.

One contemporary suggests that a close time should be enacted in the Bahamas and other localities where the sponges are diminishing in numbers; but with or without such a law, the possibility of growing sponges at will and increasing their numbers indefinitely, in the manner indicated by the German naturalists, should soon set at rest any doubts as to the falling off in the supply of these invaluable articles.

OLD SAWS WITH NEW HANDLES.

WHEN the cat's away—the servants have some difficulty in accounting for broken crockery and vanished cold meat.

Fine feathers make—just as good pillows as coarse ones.

One good turn—is as much as you can expect from a cheap silk.

What the eye doesn't see—is, as a rule, the parting of the back hair; but even that is to be viewed by the aid of a couple of mirrors.

When wine is in—as a rule, the wine merchant's bill is not long in coming in too.

Never say "dye," whatever may be the fashionable colour for hair.

A bird in the hand—should be held carefully, or it may injure itself in its struggles.

A cat may look—the picture of innocence; but don't leave it alone with a canary.

SCIENTISTS say that one-fifth of the human brain is composed of phosphorus.



[PRETTY CONSPIRATORS.]

MARGARET MOTTE.

NEVER shone winter's sun on a madder, merrier group of school-girls than that assembled in one of the upper rooms of Grandpa Motte's, one genial afternoon in January, 18—. Blue was the velvet carpet beneath their feet, and blue the silk curtains, but not a tinge of "blue" in any of their spirits; indeed, they seemed to have drunk of the bright, the golden sunshine that glimmered through the costly curtains, and shone in long, dancing beams across the white lilies under their feet.

These girls, the whole six, spent every New Year's holidays at Grandpa Motte's, remaining just long enough to execute every mischievous prank their fertile brains could invent during the months of their absence.

"Wait till we go to grandpa's," was the grand sign and countersign of everyone of the monkeys nine months in the year.

Their coming and going at grandpa's were always the occasion for multitudinous kisses, caresses and presents from the head of the house, and secret uplifting of hands from Bridget, who resignedly exclaimed, in the one case, "Bless me if ever I saw their aquils!" and in the other, "Thank goodness, and ivery bit of the chiny ain't broken, nayther."

Now these girls had been at grandpa's five weeks, and had worked so industriously as to

reach the end of their prepared programme. Now what was to be done? This question had been thoroughly discussed to the neglect of all other duties, except that of bon-bon eating, and yet they had arrived at no definite conclusion, and as a result they had been sitting for the space of five minutes in a "brown study."

"Oh, girls, I have it, I know!" suddenly exclaimed Madge, the black-eyed, from her seat on the table.

Immediately the others crowded around, exclaiming:

"Know what? Have what?"

"Got the toothache, Madge?"

"Got the toothache!" mocked Madge, turning her magnificent eyes, with supreme scorn, upon the offending cousin, Pearl Motte, a petite blonde, with hair like floss and eyes like violets.

"No, but I've got an idea."

"Tell us quick, quick!"

And Madge, as willing to tell as they to hear, answered:

"Let's send Doctor Wallace an invitation for a drive."

"Good!"

"Splendid!"

"How can we do it?"

"Isn't it unladylike?"

"Suppose Aunt Margaret finds it out?"

"How will Aunt Margaret find it out, I should like to know?" and Madge glanced suspiciously around the circle of upturned faces.

"And if we never did anything unladylike,

what would become of our good times at grandpa's?"

"That's true!" unanimously exclaimed the five. "But who will take the invitation?"

"I will," said Madge. "I'll borrow Ann's waterproof when she doesn't know it, and if the doctor isn't in I'll leave the invitation, and if he is in I'll ask for some cough syrup."

"Madge, you ought to be a general."

"Never mind about the honours. 'Make hay while the sun shines.' Pearl, bring me your writing-desk, and one of you girls must write it, we all want a share in it, you know. Blue paper! I declare, Pearl, everything you own is blue."

And Madge swept her eyes over Pearl's form, from the tiny blue kid slippers to the blue bow in her hair. The survey seemed to please her so well the blue paper was accepted without further comment.

"Now, girls, hurry with those brilliant suggestions; think to some purpose; Aunt Margaret might step in any minute."

And the pen was held, suspended over the spotless sheet, and the merry brown eyes of the speaker were turned upward toward the five laughing faces clustered about her shoulder. Of course the "suggestions" came "fast and furious," enough to fill a quire of foolscap; but when they were all sifted the following brief note received the unanimous approval of the six and was then "adopted":—

"DR. WALLACE.—Having waited quite long enough for you to invite me to take a ride, I believe I'd e'en avail myself of Leap Year privileges and invite you, but, alas! I have no carriage. How would it answer for me to invite you and your carriage too? MARGARET MOTTE."

After it was written and delivered, the six watched with breathless interest the next move of the ball they had set rolling.

"Letter for you, Dr. Wallace."

"Letter! Who brought it?"

"Dunno, sir."

"Don't know? Well, was it a man or woman?"

"Think it was, sir."

"That will do, Sam."

After Sam had retired, the doctor turned the blue-tinted envelope over once or twice with a puzzled look, then he neatly cut the end and drew out a blue-tinted sheet of paper that brought with it a perfume of spring-time, an odour of violets.

It didn't take the doctor but a moment to read the few lines, but with the reading came a look too blank for description. He ran his hand through his crisp brown curls, and read it over, then he did the same thing again, and then he laid the note down on the table, and thought aloud in this fashion:

"Margaret Motte! Which Margaret Motte? It can't be my Mar—I mean Miss Margaret Motte—and yet I never knew one of the young ladies to have sufficient courage to sign herself Margaret. Strange that every one of those Motte boys had to name their first girl after their sister. But I don't believe there's a Margaret in the lot. There's Madge, she must be seventeen, and Maggie, and Margie, and Gretta, and Marguerite, and the baby, sixteen-year-old Pearl, but not a single Margaret. If I thought one of those witches did this!"

Then the doctor, leaning back in his office chair, wearily closed his eyes, while his fingers toyed idly with the perfumed note. His meditations seemed not of the pleasantest kind, for now and then he sighed. Some minutes passed in this manner, then the doctor arose from his seat, and, standing before his desk, wrote carefully, and with many a smile:

"MISS MOTTE.—May I have the great honour and the still greater pleasure of a ride in your company to-morrow at two? Yours truly, ALFRED WALLACE."

For a moment or two the doctor scanned the "yours truly;" it didn't exactly suit him, for

didn't he sign that when he wrote to anyone? And now— Finally, with a shrug or two of the shoulders, he concluded to let the "yours truly" go, and folding and sealing the note, all signs gone now, he rang a small bell, which was immediately answered by Sam.

"Sam, take this note to Mr. Motte's in B— street, and inquire for Miss Margaret Motte. You will know her by her dark eyes and rosy cheeks; give this note into her hand—be sure you give it to no other."

"Yes, sir."

And Sam disappeared.

"Oh, girls, girls! here comes the doctor's errand-boy. He is coming up the steps. Pearl, run down quick; if he has a note Ann will be sure to take it straight to Aunt Margaret."

In another moment, Pearl, like a floating cloud of azure, stood before the bewildered Sam.

"Are you Miss Margaret Motte?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Have you got blue eyes?" persisted Sam, while his own rolled conspicuously all over vacancy.

"Of course I have. Don't you see?"

"Well, then, I have got a note for you," and Sam placed the note in Pearl's willing hand, and darted down the steps with an air of relief most refreshing to behold.

In a few minutes that note had passed from one Margaret to another, meeting with a great many exclamations on the way, and was finally deposited on the hall table "for a minute," where, in an hour afterwards, it was found by a neat little lady, scarcely as tall as Pearl, in a black dress, with the blackest eyes and rosiest cheeks, and the curliest short black hair. Picking up the much-read note, she scanned the address.

"Why, this is for me!" she exclaimed. "And those naughty children have opened it."

Going quickly to her own room, taking the precaution to lock the door, Miss Margaret drew the sheet of paper from the envelope, and the next instant clutched at the open air for support, then sank down all in a heap on the soft carpet. Fainted? Not quite, as the tears on the now pale cheeks testified. Groping about for the note that had caused this sudden weakness, she read it over and over, then calmly, with a brighter light in the black eyes, proceeded about the every-day duties as though nothing had happened.

"Now, girls, are we all ready?"

"All ready!" echoed the chorus.

And six figures stood on tip-toe, watching the corner of the street through the blinds.

"Here he comes—now!"

And as Dr. Wallace stopped his restive horses before Grandpa Motte's, the front door opened, and the doctor from among his carriage rugs looked up to be electrified by the sight of every one of those Motte girls filing down the steps, Indian fashion, with Madge in sealakin and scarlet at the head, and Pearl in white shawl and blue hat in the rear. To say the doctor was astonished and embarrassed but faintly expresses the situation. Down they all came, as grave as monks, and in another moment the carriage was surrounded by the silent cordon.

"Really, young ladies, I—ahem—"

Just then the door opened again, and every head was turned to look at the little figure which, with its fur-lined cloak wrapped closely about it, was descending the steps. Ere the girls recovered from their surprise, the little lady had stepped into the carriage and the doctor was driving slowly away.

Of course there was nothing left for the girls to do but look into each other's faces and laugh, and when Dr. Wallace and Miss Margaret heard the merry ripple they turned their heads to see the six filing up the steps, with Pearl at the head and black-eyed Madge in the rear, shaking her heads at the departing vehicle. Tucking the

rugs carefully in around the dainty little lady, Dr. Wallace mentally reflected:

"Just as pretty as ever, and not a day older than she was ten years ago."

Then he said aloud:

"Are you quite warm and comfortable?"

A pleasant flush was all the answer vouchsafed, but it was sufficient. After that conversation seemed unnecessary. Miss Margaret's cheeks glowed rosier than ever, perhaps with the cold, and her eyes sparkled like diamonds, while the doctor leaned back and furtively watched the ever-changing expression of the face so near his own.

Soon they left the busy city with its noisy crowd, and turned into a country road with masses of evergreen shutting out the view on either side. For the first time Miss Margaret appeared to notice the direction they were taking, and the happy light died out of the black eyes, and a slight, involuntary shiver passed over the little woman so snugly wrapped up.

The doctor noticed the change, and the sad, stern lines came out again around his eyes; but he said nothing till they drove slowly past a tiny cottage, almost hidden from the road in its bower of evergreens.

The doctor watched to see if his companion's head turned ever so slightly towards the deserted-looking cottage; but Miss Margaret's eyes were bent straight ahead, and had a very determined look in their shining depths. With a sigh, and a glance towards the house, the doctor remarked:

"You know Nellie Seymour is dead?"

In an instant Miss Margaret's face flushed, even to the edge of the tiny rings over her forehead, and then she turned with a defiant light in the black eyes, and a quiver in her voice:

"Did you bring me here to talk of her? I think I told you once never to mention that woman's name to me again."

"Margaret," and the doctor turned and looked straight into the flashing eyes beside him, "Margaret, Nellie Seymour was my own sister, Helen Wallace."

"Your sister! I thought she became your wife!"

And as the words gurgled through the stiffening lips the eyes closed suddenly, and the head sank back helplessly among the warm furs.

"Fainted! I might have known she would."

And Dr. Wallace carefully raised the head, and, bracing it against his shoulder, started the horses into a trot. The swift, rushing air soon did its work, and Miss Margaret awoke to the consciousness of an arm about her that she did not in the least object to, although she was too wise to notice it, and the first intimation the doctor received of his new patient's recovery was the question:

"Why didn't you tell me this, then—ten years ago?"

"You wouldn't let me; don't you remember you ordered me to leave your presence with the air of a tragedy queen? Neither would Nellie allow me to reveal the secret of her identity even to you."

"Yes, but I do not understand. Helen's name was not Seymour."

"No, she married a Roland Watson; but Watson drank and abused her, and finally forged a cheque and was obliged to flee the country, leaving his wife in very poor health and penniless. Then you remember Helen was very proud-spirited, and when I begged her to come to me and allow me to support her and try to restore her health, she would do so only on condition that I would not reveal her identity to any one. She did not wish Roland to know even of her existence, so assumed the name of Seymour; and, through her pride in the old family name, preferred to be gossiped over and even slandered as Nellie Seymour rather than pitied as poor Helen Wallace. Ah!" continued the doctor, sadly, "I little thought what that promise would cost me. In my great pity for that loved twin sister who had been the pet and the light of our old home

I never once thought of the construction the blind world in general, and my precious wife-to-be in particular, would put upon my actions and secrecy."

"How long has she been dead?"

"Two years."

"I noticed a plain stone in Hazelwood marked Nellie Wallace."

"Yes, I had it marked with the only name she never had cause to blush for, but the world—our little world, self-deceived there—took that as confirmation of its own cruel gossip, and mentally added 'wife of Alfred Wallace.'"

"Why, oh, why didn't you tell me this sooner?"

"You forget, Margaret, you were away one year, and, besides, you told me never to enter your presence again till you sent for me. I felt that you were unjust, and—I have waited—not two years, but two ages."

Miss Margaret looked mystified. Why had he told her now? She hadn't sent for him yet; but, ere her lips could frame the words, the doctor had drawn a small package from his pocket, and, placing it tenderly in her hands, remarked:

"She left it for you."

With trembling hands Miss Margaret untied the ribbon that held it, and found within a picture of a very beautiful woman, a long curl of sunny hair, and a letter. The letter was too long to transcribe, but the last passage was:

"SISTER MARGARET—let me call you so once, for you would have been Alfred's wife long ago had I not brought this terrible blight on your happiness—forgive me, forgive him. You know how true he has been to me; he is equally true to you, and what he has suffered for our sakes can never be told. Forgive him, Margaret, as you expect to be forgiven."

Slowly Margaret folded up these mementoes of a dead playmate, and then assilence ensued that she could not break and the doctor dared not. But, glancing down yearningly on his Margaret's face, he was unutterably delighted to meet half-way the big black eyes swimming in tears.

"Margaret, will you forgive me?"

What her answer was is needless to record; but at the supper table that night little Pearl suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, Aunt Margaret! Where did you get that lovely ring? I never saw you wear a ring before, and I am quite sure that is an old r—Oh! ouch! Who was that pinched me? Madge Motte and you, Grett—just wait till we get up in our room! And where's all my chocolate gone?"

"I didn't drink it, either!"

"Grandpa Motte, I never met with such an uneducated set of grand-children as yours."

This from Madge, and in the argument that followed Aunt Margaret had opportunity to finish her supper and slip unnoticed out of the room. No sooner had the door closed behind her retreating form than the debate was summarily closed too, and a mimic but very soft clapping of hands by the six followed, accompanied by a sparkling telegraphy of eyes; and dear old Grandpa Motte had to ask twice for a spoon. Of course when he was heard he received six.

After this, Dr. Wallace's visits became of daily occurrence, and he himself became the victim of all the sly little jokes and tricks invented by the six. When he sent his card up to Miss Margaret he frequently saw everyone of the girls first. Sometimes he found a lady's ulster in place of his overcoat, and the coat non est; and once he wore a lady's walking hat home—picked it up where he had put his down, and although it didn't fit at all comfortably or naturally, he never suspected it till he noticed the smiles of friends.

Almost every day he received a note from one or more "Margaret Motte," making some preposterous request, or sending him on some ridiculous errand. Occasionally their jokes rebounded on their own heads, but that only added spice to their fun, and was received accordingly.

When, in six weeks after the ride, the girls had the great pleasure of assisting in a slight degree at what was called one of the most stylish, certainly the pleasantest, weddings of the season, they openly congratulated themselves when in the secrecy of their own "blue room," upon the unexpected result of their Leap Year escapade.

And they pledged themselves never to reveal their share in what Madge would call the "catastrophe," for it was quite evident Dr. Wallace thought Aunt Margaret did write that note, and it was equally probable that he would never mention it to Aunt Margaret; for said Madge:

"Doctors are so absent-minded, always thinking about salts and semms, and rhubarb, and all such dreadful things, and I don't believe he will remember he is married when he gets back to his patients." And then she added, "Wasn't it splendid that we got the note back? I wonder what Sam did with that sovereign?"

Before any of the cousins had time to advance any particular theory concerning that particular sovereign a light rap was heard, and immediately the door was opened far enough to admit the genial face of Dr. Wallace, who, after a quick survey of the room, unconsciously walked in, closing the door after him.

Advancing to the centre table, he placed thereon a package which he had brought with him, and proceeded to remove from the same six smaller packages, the girls regarding this singular proceeding with considerable astonishment, not unmixed with suspicion; for what might not those dangerous-looking bundles contain, and who could tell what method this much-tried, long-forbearing man might pursue to settle old accounts with these, his tormentors?

"Young ladies," here the girls looked at each other—what sort of a lecture was this address a prelude to?—"I beg your pardon for my abruptness, but some six weeks ago I received a note, signed Margaret Motte, in relation to a ride."

Madge arched her brows, and the blondes coloured very perceptibly.

"That note spanned a great trouble in two lives, and became the great bow of promise of which your Aunt Margaret is the precious fulfilment. Now," and the doctor glanced around the circle of faces with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "as I really do not know to which of you, Margaret Motte, I owe my great happiness I will thank you individually and collectively, and beg that you will each accept one of these packages as a slight token of my appreciation of the great obligation under which you have placed me."

Before the girls had recovered from their surprise Dr. Wallace had again reached the door, where he turned to say, with mock gravity:

"By the way, ladies, I have lost that note; I hope if any of you should find it, you will be kind enough to return it to me, for if your Aunt Margaret should ever discover it I would not like to be answerable for the consequences. I shouldn't be surprised if she obtained a divorce from me, and issued an edict of banishment from Motte Hall against you." And with a smile and a bow he was gone, leaving the girls almost dumbfounded.

So he did know it all, after all; and really, what would Aunt Margaret—who would not believe it possible her pieces could be so unladylike—say if she should find it out? And what was in the packages? Ah, such lovely, jewelled lockets, each containing a picture of Dr. and Mrs. Wallace, and each one marked "Margaret Motte," and each one attached to an elegant gold chain. In another moment Madge was leaning over the balusters, calling softly:

"Doctor—Doctor Wallace!"

"Excuse me," answered the doctor, as he smiled up into the flushed, happy face above him; "were you calling me?"

Without taking any notice of the implied correction, Madge whispered back:

"Come up—please—you've forgotten something."

And, as the doctor came springing up the steps with outstretched hand, Madge placed her own

within it for an instant, and then fled back to the blue room, while the doctor retraced his steps slowly, whistling softly, and tearing something between his fingers into fragments, which, as they fluttered downward, flecked the rich carpet with a tiny trail of blue atoms. Once he shrugged his shoulders and exclaimed, with a world of amusement in his voice:

"What would Mrs. Wallace say?"

In ten minutes after the happy bride and groom were being whirled away on their long-deferred wedding tour, followed by the hearty good wishes of their old friends, who were glad indeed to see at last the silver lining to that dark cloud; also, by sundry secret misgivings of a few new friends, who "sincerely hoped they hadn't married in haste to repent at leisure."

But the last and pleasantest glimpse of "home sweet home" that lingered with the little bride till her return was the balcony of the blue room with its six graceful occupants, whose smiling faces, sparkling eyes, and waving handkerchiefs seemed far more eloquent and sincere than all the speeches of the occasion. M. M. Q.

FACETIÆ.

PARTS OF SPEECH.

PA (who is on pleasure bent): "If J. calls, say that I've gone to town on business."

DAUGHTER (timidly): "But, pa, dear, won't that be like a 'grammer'?"

PA (boldly): "That's what you've got to say, and don't you mind whether it's like a 'grammer' or not!" —Fun.

A TAILOR'S LOVE-LETTER.

DEAR MARY, I've not seemed to love,
Or else I'm strangely dreaming.
Believe me, Truth inspires the words,
I loved while I was seaming.
I ne'er forsook the path of truth,
Shunned each deceitful winding,
And many a binding vow, in sooth,
Was made while I was binding.

For thee I've studied night and day
Each reel and twist and fashion;
For thee I've sown—oh, let me reap
The fulness of my passion.
What Tweeds I've crossed for thee, my
love;

What Cheviots I've passed over,
From Melton on to Chesterfield
I've been a constant rover.

I've passed the needles through and
through
Without a pilot troubling,
And I have doubled many a cape,
Just as this cape I'm doubling.
You cannot say that I indulge
In vain and truthless speeches;
No breach of promise will I make
While I am making breeches!

So now, my dear, I'll say no more,
Let's to the church be tripping,
And show our friends the wedlock-
stitch—

The stitch there's no unripping.
And then, my love, by night and day
I'll toil, nor cash be wasting;
And though I've nothing else to haste,
I'll not give you a basting.

—Funny Folks.

AT THE LIBERAL LAUNDRY.

MRS. PREMIER: "Drot them there Tory laundresses, say I; which we've got to do up all their things over again, a-keeping us back from our own work." —Fun.

QUET COMMENTS.

A SHORT time ago a report came from America of the discovery of an Electric girl. This has evidently piqued Mr. Edison, for it is

announced he has invented a new illumination in connection with Electric buoys.

It is stated that the House of Commons during the O'Donnell-Lacour scene, was once again turned into a bear garden. It generally is when a political storm is bruin.

The President-elect of America is credited with having an enormously large hand. This is not surprising when his recent big feat is remembered.

Mr. Herbert Reeves, son of the great tenor, has made his first appearance, but the critics consider his voice wanting in strength. Most sincerely we can say "More power to him." —Fun.

THE WAR CRY OF THE ARAB.—Up and "Be-douin." —Fun.

GOOD NAME for a very spare "light of the harem"—Anti-Fat-ima. —Funny Folks.

THE GENTLE ANSWER.

"HAVE you got the rent ready at last?"
"No, sir, mother's gone out washing, and forgot to put it out for you."

"Did she tell you she'd forgotten?"
"Yes, sir." —Judy.

"BACK Numbers"—Movements of melody by that composer. —Funny Folks.

THE GOOD LESSON.

YOUTHFUL LONDONER (who hitherto has been to bed betimes): "Oh, mamma, look! there's another sun over there."

MAMMA: "No, dear, that's not the sun. Don't you know what it is that gives light by night?"

Y. L.: "Gas." —Judy.

IMPROVETU.

(On Sarah the successful.)

ENVY by her success no doubt is nursed.

Well, Bern-hardt turns to Hardt-bern when reversed! —Funny Folks.

DANCING PUMPS!—Precisely so. And so, in fact, does any violent bodily exercise. —Funny Folks.

FASHION.—A SOLILOQUY.

THE way the ladies are progressing
Plain words may scarce express;
Tis by the process of undressing
That they achieve "full dress."

Tight-lacing early graves is filling;
Nor that the only ill:
Bare necks and shoulders both are
"killing;"

But 'tis the girls they kill.

—Funny Folks.

THIRSTY SOULS.

DOCTOR (who had just seen the patient): "He's no worse, but" (gravely) "the question will, no doubt, soon arise as to the advisability of tapping him?"

MOTHER-IN-LAW: "Oh, doctor, don't say that! Nothing was ever tapped in this house that lasted over a week!" —Punch.

ARE Welsh rabbits included in "Ground Game"? —Punch.

LIVE WHILE YOU MAY.

TIMID PASSENGER (as the gale freshened): "Is there any danger?"

TAE (ominously): "Well, them as likes a good dinner had better hev it to-day!" —Punch.

INSECTIVOROUS.

WHAT kind of man is most likely to worm his way in the world?—One with a sluggish temperament. —Funny Folks.

A CHECK FROM THE TARTAN.

(Scene: Slopes of a Highland hill.)

COOKNEY (his first trip to the Highlands, but, of course, had heard a great deal about those fearful linguists, the Highlanders, at his club, you know): "Well, Toogal, this was a fine morning the night previous, whatever, no more, and she'll hope she be's well hereafter?"
TOOGAL (severely): "Ay, ma young mon,

Toogal may be Heelan, but she'll no be so Heelan as all that." —Judy.

ALARMING SYMPTOM.

PAPA (reading paper): "A remarkable case of pigmentation has occurred. A white infant first showed a local symptom of duskiness on the skin, which spread and darkened until the child became, and remains, black as ebony." (To nurse, entering.) "Good gracious, nurse, what is the matter?"

MAMMA: "Baby is not ill?"
NURSE: "No, mum; but it's been crying that bad, 'it's black in the face!'" —Funny Folks.

THE society lady never sheds tears. She knows enough to keep her powder dry.

It is the easiest thing in the world to find a man willing to bet a hat on his candidate, but it is the hardest thing in the world to find the man if he loses.

A FLOREAL SWELL—The dandelion.

REALLY A FACT THIS TIME.

(Rise of Intellect in the Midland Counties.)

DIOCESAN INSPECTOR: "And what happened when they came to Paphos?"

CHILD: "St. Paul struck Elymas the sorcerer blind."

D. I.: "What did he strike him blind for?"
CHILD: "Because he 'sanced' him, sir." —Judy.

TRAGIC.

("Artificial dimples are the latest novelty They are made by removing a slight portion of the muscle of the cheek."—Trifler.)

She wept, she wept, and she wept,
As she sat with her head in a wimple.

"Why this grief?" I exclaimed, as I stept
To her aid; and her answer was simple:

"They said I could make either side
In my cheek a most beautiful dimple

If I cut out a piece; and I tried:
And it isn't a dim—it's a pim—ple!" —Funny Folks.

A MAN the other day was so hard up that he could not raise an umbrella.

"The family man," says Mrs. Quilp, "resembles an oyster on half-shell. The shell is known at home—the soft side abroad."

THE law against carrying concealed weapons does not apply to bicycles. They are revolvers, but they avoid cart ridges, and never go off themselves.

FORCED politeness—Bowling to necessity.

OUT OF THE WORLD.

OLD LADY: "Have you 'The Pictorial World'?"

BOOKSELLER: "Very sorry, ma'am—quite sold out; but we shall have more in on Saturday."

O. L.: "Then please keep me one. Please God I'm alive, I'll call for it, if not, I'll send the carrier." —Fun.

NO DOUBT!

MISS BRABAZON: "Have you seen our new comedy, Mr. Trevor?—and how do you like it?"

MR. TREVOR: "I was in front the other night, Miss Brabazon, and methinks had the author plucked a few feathers from the wings of his imagination, and placed them on the tail of his judgment, the play had been better." —Fun.

THRIFT.

BROWN (with an eye to economy): "I will wear the new hat, then, and leave my old oneto be done up."

SHOPMAN: "Done up! About 'done up' already, isn't it, sir?" —Fun.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CRITICISM.

CRITIC: "Sorr, it's by tachin' the ignorant

public what is good or bad, accordin' to me loights, that I get me living intirely!"

LAYMAN: "And how's the ignorant public to know whether you are right or wrong?"

CRITIC (innocently): "By the coincidence of the popular verdict with moine, sorr, or the reverse! But either way I turn an honest penny!" —Funny Folks.

"Will the action lie?" inquires the anxious client. "Yes," replies the facetious attorney, "the action will lie if the witnesses will."

THE LILAC BUSH AT THE DOOR.

A MAIDEN passed my door to-day,
Who held in her hands a lilac spray;
As I caught the breath of the perfumed bloom,

I seemed to see my mother's room,
And the lilac bush that stood before
The dear old homestead's ample door.

And mother was there as she used to stand,
With her kind eyes arched by her slender hand,

As she looked down the dusty street,
For home-coming steps of our little feet;

And a goodly picture we thought she made,
As she stood, half hid by the lilac shade.

And, oh! to think that strangers roam
O'er the cherished spot we once called home;

That they know the path to the bubbling spring,
And the arching elm where we had our swing;

That they own the woodland walks and ways,
And the kine that on the hillside graze.

But there are treasures that still are mine,
Afar though I am from the lowing kine;

For here, in my care-environed room,
I scent the fragrant lilac bloom,
And, lo! in a moment the air is rife
With the sights and sounds of childhood life.

The brown thrush sings and the lilacs glow,
'Tis the song and the bloom of the "long ago;"

I list to the voices long since still,
And forgotten joys my worn heart thrill;

And toil and trouble have lost their power,
And I am a child for one happy hour.

On the wings of love my thoughts fly back
O'er the long-forgotten, shadowy track,

I'm a child once more at my mother's knee,
And my wild heart throbs in ecstasy;

And I see, for I know by the lilac's bloom,
My mother's room, my mother's room.

L. S. U.

STATISTICS.

THE ITALIAN ARMY.—The official reports furnished to the Italian Minister of War show that on April 1 this year the Italian army consisted of 218,210 men, of whom 103,210 were infantry of the line, 39,290 mountain corps and Bersaglieri, 22,177 cavalry, and 22,530 infantry.

THE GREEK ARMY.—The Greek army is to be

raised from its present strength of 12,300 to 40,000 men. The greatest energy is being displayed in collecting munitions of war, and horses are being purchased at various places on the Continent, in Algeria, and in Syria.

THE FRENCH MEAT SUPPLY FROM ABROAD.

—The French Ministry of Commerce has, for the first time, published statistics on the imports of cattle and pigs into that country. The return applies to the first four months of the present year, and shows that during that period in all 87,000 head of horned cattle, 575,000 sheep, and 95,000 pigs have been imported; that of these only 131 oxen, 1,405 sheep, and 26 pigs were brought from America; and that the principal exporter of oxen to France is Italy, which sends nearly two-thirds of the total imported. Algeria sends no fewer than 62,000 sheep.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ASPARAGUS OMELETTE.—Boil half a bunch of asparagus, and cut the tops and tender part into half-inch lengths; season with a little salt, pepper, and butter, and put aside on the stove to keep warm while you make your omelette. Beat six eggs, whites and yolks together, with a teaspoonful of milk for each egg, a saltspoonful of salt, and a pinch of white pepper; brown two tablespoonfuls of butter on a frying-pan; pour your eggs in, and as soon as it begins to set at the edges turn them up and shake your pan to keep the omelette from sticking; it will be sufficiently cooked in five minutes; put your asparagus in, double the omelette, and serve immediately on a hot dish.

MACARONI AND KIDNEY.—Wash and cut one kidney small; chop an onion fine, and fry a light brown in a tablespoonful of butter; add a teaspoonful of salt, a saltspoonful of white pepper, and a very little red pepper; put your kidney in this, cover closely, and let them stew (not boil) for two hours; stew half a can of tomatoes, seasoned with salt, pepper, and butter; boil half a pound of macaroni in two quarts of water, a tablespoonful of salt; let the water come to the full boil before putting in the macaroni, then let it boil twenty minutes, or till tender; put the macaroni in the colander and run cold water over it. Put a layer of macaroni in a baking-dish, spread over it a teaspoonful of butter, part of the stewed kidney, some of the gravy from the kidney, and a layer of stewed tomatoes, and so on till the dish is full, letting the macaroni and butter be on top; sprinkle with a tablespoonful of fine bread-crumbs, and bake for half an hour in a quick oven.

MISCELLANEOUS.

COMPETITIVE EXHIBITION OF SHIP MODELS.—The Shipwrights' Company have unanimously resolved to hold a second competitive exhibition of ship models in 1882.

THE UNIVERSITY CRICKET MATCH.—The 46th annual match between the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge resulted in the victory of the latter by 115 runs. Cambridge has now won twenty-three matches, Oxford twenty-one, and two have been drawn.

THEODORUS, King of Abyssinia, who killed himself in 1868, when the British took his city of Magdalen, used to keep several tame lions as pets in his house.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—The directors of the Crystal Palace have leased to the firm of Messrs. Nicholson and Co., silk mercers, drapers, &c., of St. Paul's Churchyard, the court heretofore known as the "Music Court." In this department they have displayed a very large array of their goods, whilst competent assistants are in attendance to explain and answer any inquiry. This is a novel innovation, but it must prove instructive to the visitor, as Messrs. Nicholson keep up a constant succession of the latest novelties in mantles, costumes, dresses, &c.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[SPECIAL NOTICE.—In our next number will commence a highly interesting serial story, entitled "Bridged by His Love," specially written by an accomplished and favourite author.]

MADCAP MAUDE.—If you are wise you will use no chalk or powder at all. Plain food, fresh air and exercise, and cleanliness, will do all that is necessary for a good complexion. However, a little pure milk mixed with flowers of sulphur and rubbed into the skin is said by some to keep it soft and clear.

T. R. E.—The best thing you can do, if you must have a hair dye, and you do not like the one we recommended, is to watch the public advertisements respecting such articles and make your own selection.

A THIRSTY SOUL.—Ask for Cooper's Effervescent Lozenges—we think you would find them eminently refreshing as well as conveniently portable and inexpensive, for they can be purchased at the manufactory in Oxford Street, and probably from most chemists, at one shilling and three halfpence the box, and can be comfortably carried in the pocket.

F. C.—You do not mean a special but a common marriage licence, the cost of which is about fifty shillings. It is procurable at Doctors' Commons, where you may obtain all particulars concerning it.

S. C. J.—Send us your advertisement again and we will insert it.

A. J. G.—1. We cannot give you any further information. 2. Yes, you had better put your address to each communication.

C. T. L. R.—Concerning Balmian's luminous paint, Messrs. Illies and Horne, 31, Aldermanbury, E.C., are the agents for the patent.

S. C. J.—Your letter may not have reached us. Please send again.

AILEEN.—Our correspondent is informed that "there is such a thing as paint sold." But if by the meagre query a pigment for the skin is meant we must decline to recommend "such a thing," because highly injurious.

EDITH M.—Warts may be removed from the skin by the application of lunar caustic, but your case is one which you ought not to attempt to treat without the advice of a doctor.

R. H.—We make no charge for such advertisements—we insert them gratis as we find room for them.

J. MCCORMICK.—Plain ice cream is commonly composed of new milk, 2 pints; eggs, 6 yolks; white sugar, 4 oz. These ingredients mixed are placed in a tin with a handle at the top and plunged into a bucket containing ice broken into small pieces, added to salt of about one-third of its bulk. The tin is then rapidly moved backwards and forwards until its contents have been thoroughly congealed. To flavour them mix with half their weight of any mashed or preserved fruit desired.

J. T.—Let the article remain exposed to the sun and wind for a sufficient time, or, that process not being quick enough, steep for several hours in a solution of, say, one pound of soda to a gallon of boiling soft water, after which place in a mixture of one part chloride of lime and eight parts water, having previously allowed it to settle and be drawn off clear. Then wash in the ordinary manner.

A CONSTANT READER.—The cost entirely depends upon the lodge of which you become a member. Send to the secretary of the Grand Lodge, Great Queen Street, London, W.C.

ESSIE M.—The efficacy of the remedy known as Mother Siegel's Curative Syrup in similar cases to your own appears to be vouched for by witnesses of unimpeachable veracity. The immense and rapid popularity of this specific for so many of the "ills that flesh is heir to," is also unquestionably an evidence of its value. The history of the discovery and utilization of the characteristic vegetable product which forms its basis by the kindly German frau whose name the syrup bears is very interesting. You can obtain a pamphlet giving the little history and every information about this useful medicinal agent of your local chemist, or from the London agents. See advertisement on our Part wrapper.

D. J. R. K.—Not having the advantage of seeing even your photograph, we cannot pronounce upon the views of your relatives, but the presumption is they are right. Your forehead need not prevent your becoming a useful and honourable man. The Greeks were not all of one sort. Some of them were mean, cowardly, and wicked, even though possessed of fine Grecian faces. "The mind's the standard of the man."

BRENTON.—We cannot advise you in such a matter, more especially as your affliction is hereditary. Consult a medical practitioner.

B. B.—Take every morning a wineglassful of water to which have been added six to ten drops of concentrated solution of chloride of soda.

G. W. B.—twenty, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, fond of home and music.

LOTTIE and NELLIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Lottie is nineteen, medium height, fair, fond of home and music. Nellie is nineteen, tall, fair, fond of home and music.

FRANCES, twenty-one, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a good-looking young man about twenty-three.

W. J. S. and S. A., two husbands, wish to correspond with two young ladies. W. J. S. is twenty, light brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition. S. A. is twenty-one, fair, medium height. Respondents must be about eighteen or nineteen, and of a loving disposition.

LULU, thirty-three, a widow, medium height, domesticated, fair, fond of home, would like to correspond with a sober man with a view to matrimony.

LET THE OLD HOUSE STAND.

Oh, let the old house stand!
Long has it looked away
Over grounds by the fathers planned
Scenes dear to thy childhood's day;
And still in its age and gloom,
Lone and grey amid newer things,
An air of the hearth and home
Like ivy around it clings.

Room hast thou here to build,
Still granting this landmark space,
That so long in the past hath filled
An honoured, though homely, place.
Not thine the pretence that hold
In the din and roar of trade,
Where the New, supplanting the Old,
In its own swift turn must fade.

Oh, let the old house stand!
With reverent eye survey
How solid and strong and grand
They built in that elder day.
How the still staunch walls arise
To the roof-tree's grip unstrained,
As an Atlas bracing his thighs
For task-work, Heaven ordained.

Gabled and quaint its towers,
But still can the scenes recall
Which else in these times of ours
Might loosen their tender thrall;
Scenes grave and gay, and more true,
Perchance, than now weave their tie.
See! it looks on the churchyard, too,
Where the bones of thy kindred lie.

Then, choose for thy home new-planned
A footing somewhat apart,
And the old house still let stand
As a landmark dear to the heart;
For still in its age and gloom,
Lone and grey amid newer things,
An air of the hearth and home
Like ivy around it clings.

N. D. U.

PERCIVAL N. and FRANK G., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Percival G. is dark, of medium height, fond of music and dancing. Frank G. is tall, fair, fond of home and children, loving.

TRUE and BENDALL, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. True is twenty-one, tall, fair, good-looking, fond of music and dancing. Bendall is eighteen, dark, medium height, good-looking, fond of home and music. Respondents must be about twenty-four, tall, good-tempered, loving, dark, good-looking.

A. B., eighteen, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen.

R. S. G., twenty-two, of a loving disposition, fond of music, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

ALICE and SYLVIA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Alice is eighteen, light hair and eyes, loving, fond of home and children. Sylvia is seventeen, medium height, brown hair and eyes, fond of home and children, domesticated. Respondents must be about twenty.

ANNIE and MARION, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Annie is twenty-one, dark hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Marion is eighteen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height, loving, fond of home. Respondents must be about the same age, tall, dark.

WIDOWER would like to correspond with a widow lady with a view to matrimony.

FREDY, twenty-one, dark, hazel eyes, fond of music, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

BEATRICE and BESSY would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Beatrice is dark, medium height, of a loving disposition, dark eyes, fond of home and music. Bessy is seventeen, hazel eyes, tall, fair, loving, fond of home and children.

LYDIA and LILLIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Lydia is twenty-three, tall, fair, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing. Lillie is twenty-one, dark, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home, thoroughly domesticated. Respondents must be about twenty-four, dark.

JAMES, twenty-four, tall, handsome, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be dark, good-looking, fond of home and music.

LILY and RUTH, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Lily is nineteen, dark hair and eyes, tall. Ruth is twenty-two, tall, brown hair, and blue eyes.

FORGE ROLLS and STEAM HAMMER, two mechanics, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Forge Rolls is twenty-two, dark, handsome, tall, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. Steam Hammer is twenty, medium height, curly hair, dark eyes, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be of a loving disposition.

ANNIE and DEISON, two friends, would like to correspond with two tradesmen with a view to matrimony. Annie is eighteen, tall, fair. Deison is nineteen, fond of home and dancing, domesticated.

ETHEL, BEATRICE, and EVA, three friends, would like to correspond with three gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Ethel is twenty-eight, dark, good-looking, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Beatrice is twenty-three, tall, fair, brown eyes, fond of music and dancing. Eva is twenty-five, tall, fair, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between twenty-five and thirty-five, of loving dispositions, tall, dark.

LUCIE, nineteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, domesticated, fond of children, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-two.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

A. Q. F. is responded to by—F. S., twenty, tall, good-looking, fond of home and children.

JESSIE by—John, dark, good-looking.

CASSIE by—Edward, tall, dark.

T. W. T. J. by—A. B., nineteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, loving.

NELLY B. by—Tom E., nineteen, medium height, fair, good-looking.

W. S. by—Clare, twenty, fair, loving, medium height, fond of home.

FLAT FOOT by—Flat Fish, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

GABRIEL by—Violet, good-looking, tall, fair, of a loving disposition.

J. S. by—Ida, brown hair, grey eyes, fond of home, loving.

W. T. by—Louise, medium height, brown hair.

J. P. by—J. M., eighteen, fair, loving, fond of home and children.

CISBY by—Dosey, twenty-five, tall, fair, good-looking, fond of home and children.

W. G. B. by—Muriel, nineteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, good-looking.

M. G. H. by—Irene, twenty, tall, brown hair and eyes, loving.

GEORGIUS by—Kate W.

HOSE by—Clara, fair.

BRANCH PIPE by—Maud, fond of home.

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